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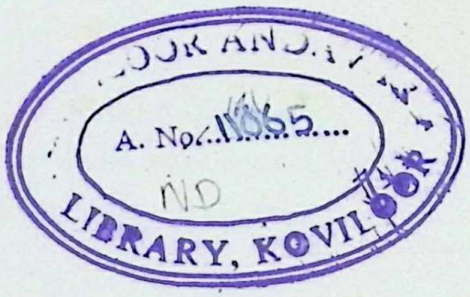
THE THANJAVUR ART GALLERY

BRONZE SCULPTURES

(A Descriptive Catalogue with Illustrations in Colour)

Volume-I



S. Rathnasabapathy B.A.,

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DEDICATED

to the memory of my guru
late Padmabushan, Dr., T.N. Ramachandran M.A., Phd.,
formerly Joint Director of the department
of Archaeology, Government of India
New Delhi.

and

to the District Collectors
(Ex-officio chairmen of the administrative committee
of the Thanjavur Art Gallery):

Thiruvalargal:

T.K. Palaniappan, I.A.S.,
R.M. Sundaram, I.C.S.,
C.A. Ramakrishnan, I.C.S.,
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D. Sundaresan, I.A.S.,
S. Meikandadevan, I.A.S.,

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MAP OF THANJAVUR DISTRICT

SHOWING THE SITUATION OF SOURCES FROM WHICH THE IMAGES OF THE CATALOGUE HAVE BEEN COLLECTED.

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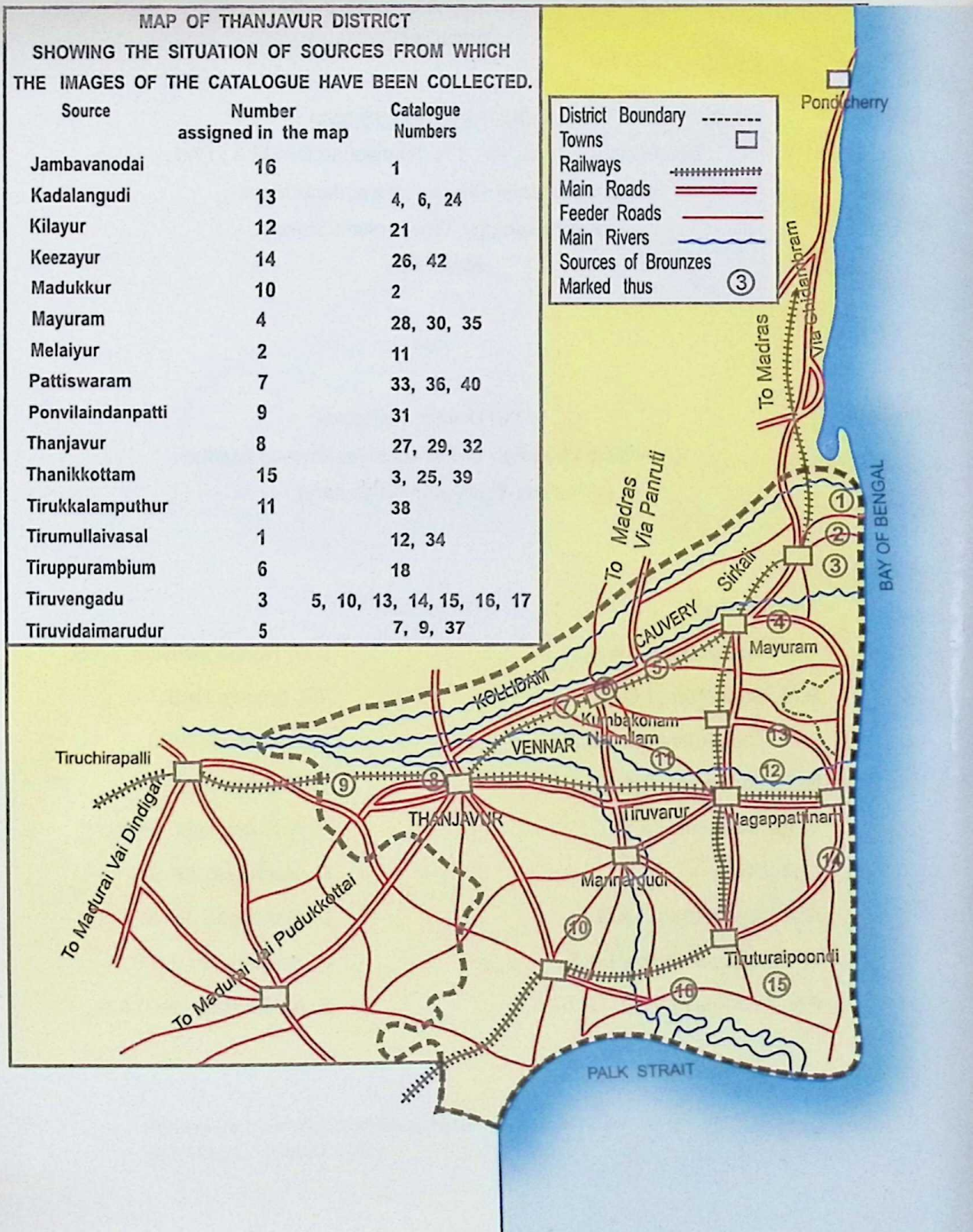

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FOREWORD.

"A THING OF BEAUTY IS A JOY FOR EVER, ITS LOVELINESS INCREASES; IT WILL NEVER PASS INTO NOTHINGNESS" - KEATS.

In this world of stress and strain the appeal of art is particularly important and unique. This takes us to the calmer regions of thought and emotion and often brings true appreciation of the people who produced it. Indian art has significance of its own and is essentially a product of the Indian mind and imagination in the past. It has been powerfully influenced by the Indian philosophy, emotion and mythology, and is thus a true reflection of the mind of India through the ages.

2. Indian people for centuries have looked upon the illumination of the mind and the awakening of the heart as central to man's fulfilment. To this end, art and literature are the great aids. They deepen our insight, widen our horizon, and create a more meaningful outlook of man. Art gives us the liberating vision which soothes the troubled mind and heart. Thus the great poet Keats came to the irresistible conclusion that "Beauty is Truth; Truth Beauty! that is all we need to know on earth."

3. The Art Gellery at Thanjavur is the consummation of the master-mind and genius of Thiru T.K. Palaniyappan I.A.S., the then Collector of Thanjavur who is the founder of the Thanjavur Art Gallery Institution in 1951. It was he who arrested the exodus of the stone and bronze pieces from this district and organized them under one roof to focus the attention of the lovers of art. It was from this nucleus that the present galaxy of the superb bronzes in the Art Gallery was assiduousaly built by the successive Collectors and it has now occupied the unique place in the International forum of the Museum of Art.

4. The world's best piece may be seen in one of the collections from Tiruvengadu viz., Rishabavahana Devar which is so simple and elegant in form that it has acquired the majesty and grandeur of the noblest form of art with the "Hyperion Curls; the front of Jove himself; An eye like Mars; A station like he herald Mercury, New lighted from a heaven kissing hill."

5. I am proud to state that the icons from temples in the Thanjavur District, that were left uncared for, could be collected and constituted into a museum of art by the efforts of civil servants of the Revenue Department Thanjavur. The Museum has been fostered during all these thirty years by the department so as to claim the attention of the connoisseurs of art throughout the world.

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6. The idea of writing a catalogue was mooted in the year 1967. Though the manuscript of the catalogue was ready in the year 1973, by the author Thiru. S. Rathnasabapathy, B.A., the curator of the Art Gallery (who is also from the ranks of the Revenue Dept.) no decision could be arrived at to entrust the printing of the book with a publisher. The unique pleasure of taking a decision in the matter to entrust the printing to The National Litho Press, Sivakasi was left to me after I took charge of the district as ex-officio chairman of the Art Gallery Institution during the year 1980. Even here I could entrust the printing only for a third of the catalogue. I hope that the subsequent volumes would follow very soon.

7. I hope that it would serve the best interests of the connoisseurs of Art and also for a comparative study of iconography of the large number of similar icons available in all the museums of the world.

Thanjavur.
Dated: 20 the May 1981.

(D. SUNDARESAN).
Chairman, Art Gallery and
District Collector,
Thanjavur.

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PREFACE.

Thanjavur Art Gallery possesses some of the best bronze images that form the cream of medieval Chola Art in metal. Even to start with, the number of pieces collected was fairly large. Though many of them were illustrated or referred in books of art relating so South Indian bronzes, the institution could not make any attempt to bring out an authentic catalogue of its collections and to furnish to the world of scholarship the iconographic details that have contributed to their excellence.

During a visit to this museum of art in February 1967 late Mr. Bharatha Iyer, Executive Officer of the former Academy of Benares, Varnasi which institution was later on merged with the American Institute of Indian Studies was so much impressed with the collections, that he suggested to the Academy to undertake and produce an illustrated catalogue of the stone and bronze collections as one of its projects to help the museum in the publication of a catalogue. The proposal was accepted and late Padmabushan Dr. T.N. Ramachandran, retired Joint Director General of Archaeology, Government of India, was accordingly deputed for the preparation of the script for the catalogue with the financial assistance obtained by the Academy from the Smithsonian Institute at Washington. The script was completed by him by March 1968; but follow up action to publish the manuscript was not taken. When enquiries were made by the Art Gallery regarding the stage of publication the institute stated finally in the year 1972, that the script which was prepared by Dr. T.N. Ramachandran needed careful and extensive editing and that it would not be possible for the Academy to undertake the publication. However the Institute sent a copy of the script prepared by Dr. T.N. Ramachandran permitting its use by the gallery whenever required.

As a next step in the projection of the catalogue the Art Gallery moved the Government of India, Department of Culture, for a grant-in-aid under the scheme "Reorganaisation and Development of Museums-Financial Assistance for publications" during the years 1972-1973. and again during 1973-74; but the grants promised by the Government of India were found insufficient to undertake the publication. The entire work was consequently held up.

Dr. G. Koenig, acting Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany who had occasion to peruse the catalogue prepared by me in its present form informed the chairman of the gallery of his decision to have it published with the financial assistance obtained from his country. A formal requisition of the Art Gallery to the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany was accordingly routed through the State Government and Central Government of India for permission to avail of the foreign aid. It was at this juncture that the Government of India thought it fit during 1977-78 to enhance the grant with a promise to provide one lakh Rupees for the publication of the catalogue. Even the increased grant was found inadequate as the entire grant was not made available to start the work. It took some more time therefore to make a beginning, as the cost of paper and printing had risen up in the meanwhile. Additional funds had to be organised from the resources of the Art Gallery. The Administrative Committee made a bold decision in this respect only during the middle of the year 1980 to entrust the work of printing of the book with illustrations in colour to the National Litho Press, Sivakasi. I am indebted to the Chairman of the Art Gallery, Thiru. D. Sundaresan, I.A.S;

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for his determined move to have the book published after a long interval of seven years after the completion of the manuscript of the book and also for writing up the foreword for this volume.

During the compilation of this catalogue I have received valuable help from a number of friends. Foremost, I have to acknowledge the blessings of my Guru, late Padmabushan Dr. T.N. Ramachandran. With his kind permission and that of the American Institute of Indian Studies, I have drawn from and used the materials gathered by him, sometimes his descriptive details verbatim. My co-workers Thiru. K. Govindaswamy, B.A., Assistant Curator, Mrs. D. Mallika, the Typist and late Thiru. K. Velumayilan have rendered valuable personal help, to me throughout the period. I think them all for their assistance.

At the request of the Administrative Committee of the Art Gallery to assess to quality of the text, Thiru. M. Arunachalam ex-Director, Tamil Sanskrit and other Indian languages research institute, Madras, perused the catalogue before the final decision was taken to print it. He was kind enough to convince the committee of the usefulness of the text. I am therefore indebted to him also for his encouraging remarks and his further advice to me.

Thiru R. Sethuraman, Director. of Messrs. Raman and Raman Limited., and President of the Archaeological Society Kumbakonam, personally helped me by taking the photographs, and also carbon impressions of the inscriptions, on the walls of Tiruvengadu Temple, which have been printed in Appendix IV in this book. I thank him for the invaluable help rendered by him. Thiru. S. Rajam of Mylapore musician and pinter now retired from All India Radio, Madras has drawn the excellent pen sketches for this book. They have been depicted in the book at suitable places. I thank him also for the same.

I am also thankful to all the partners of the National Litho Press Sivakasi particularly Thiru. V.S.V.P. Ponnambalam and Thiru. A. Jayapal on the administrative side, and Thiru A. Soundara Sankaralingam B.Sc., on the technical side, for their splendid co-operation in the successful get-up of this book. Photography in colour and Black and White was done by Thiru. Vidyavrata, Aurobindo Ashram, Pondichery, under the able guidance of Thiru. A.S. Chandran B.Sc., one of the partners of the firm. S. Pandia Raja artist Sivakasi worked out the artpulfor the catalogue with the assistance of Thiru P.T. Sivanesan of the press.

Thanjavur.
April 1983.

The author.

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INTRODUCTION.

Chola bronzes, particularly those relating to the earlier phases of Chola period, have been acclaimed to be the grand exposition of Indian art of the medieval period. They are to be found almost everywhere in the world in public museums or private collections; but in the Thanjavur Art Gallery a visitor can find many of the finest pieces, the best of Chola art that were produced by the dynasty between the 8th and the 13th centuries, post Chola period and those of the Nayak's during the 17th and 18th century A.D. The assembly of this museum of art has been made from the icons that were put by in the temples of the Thanjavur District as not required for worship. Almost all the finer pieces of the gallery are idols which were got buried under the earth in troubled times, recovered as treasure trove finds and acquired by the gallery. Information about provenance has been given when the images are described in detail.

2. Several centuries before the Christian era the Tamil people had established themselves in the South India as powerful rulers and enjoyed a civilisation far better advanced than that of others in the world during the period. From the well established Tamil grammar Tolkappium (the date of which is ascribed earlier than 600 BC), Sangam poetry (500 BC to 200 AD) and other contemporary, evidence, it can be established that the Chola kings one of three dynasties in the south, continued in a flourishing condition with their maritime trade extending to the far east and west for some centuries before and after the commencement of the Christian era, until they came into conflict with the 'Kalabras' who ruled over the entire Tamil country for some years in about the 3rd-5th century A.D. But it is obvious that the Tamils had asserted and re-established themselves as powerful monarchs in the south by 5th or 6th century AD. Hedged in between the two powerful neighbours namely the Pallavas in the north and the Pandyas in the south the emergence of the Cholas as a great power was naturally retarded for a gap of nearly two or three centuries. Nevertheless it was a period of Chola revival, the preparation for the subsequent imperial Chola empire, by assimilating and absorbing the Brahminical legends into the already existing Saivaism of the south, slowly shedding off earlier compromise with Buddhist and Jain religions. The same period also witnessed the fall of the three powerful dynasties (the Andhras, the Chalukyas and the Pallavas) the decay of Buddhism; the weakening of the then existing hold of Jainism over the people of Tamil Nadu and the establishment of the Saivaite faith on a firm basis. This period also witnessed the propaganda of the canonised savants viz. the sixty three saivaite Nayanmars and some of the Vaishnavite Alwars, Adi Sankarar and other stalwarts who had all lived in the Tamil Nadu during the period. Their pious acts and literature paved the way for the glorious period of Chola conquests and religious revival in the succeeding period of South Indian history. The four hymnists, Appar (Tirunavukkarasu Nayanar) Gnana-sambandar, Sundarar and Manikkavasagar visited one temple after another and sanctified them by their Thevaram and Thiruvachagam hymns, drawing public attention to these temples. Thus 274 Siva temples which were actually visited by them, besides many others not visited, are referred to by them in their hymns. Of these, 165 temples are situated in the region of Thanjavur District.

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3. The period of nearly 400 years (850 AD to 1275 AD) mark the period of intensive activity of the Cholas. Besides being great conquerors, almost all the Chola Kings were great builders of temple big and small. When their conquests were over, they concentrated in giving a shape to the religious renaissance of the Nayanmars who lived before them; Once the Chola empire had re-established itself on a firm basis, we find that a large number of Chola temples along the banks of Cauvery are converted into durable granite temples; new temples are added on in almost all places. Mobile images of gods were made in very large numbers and religious propaganda was taken to the streets by the creation of bronze images of the best aesthetic values. Thus the sculptural art which was the background of religious revival under the imperial Cholas attained a state of perfection in a land of plenty afforded by the Cauvery water and political supremacy.

4. The Thanjavur Art Gallery could in the circumstances secure some of the finest of them and exhibit them at Thanjavur town which had been the very heart and capital city of the Cholas for the most part of the Chola rule 850 to 1275 AD and the later Naick Kings 1540 to 1660 AD. The circumstances which led to the creation of the Art Gallery by its founder T.K. Palaniappan is printed in this book as Appendix II.

5. Of art revealed through the images of Hindu Gods, Chola pieces are perhaps the easiest to understand and also to appreciate their aesthetic excellence. However it must be pointed out that the artists had been constrained by codes and regulations of the Agamas (ritual treatises) and Dyana (meditative slokas prescribing the mode of worship as well as the stereotype forms of the images of Gods which came into vogue under the influences of brahminical priest hood and Puranas (mythical legends). Nevertheless, the greatness of the Chola artists lies in the fact that they had drawn their inspiration from the devotional poetry of Saint Tirumoolar, Saivaite Nayanmars and Vaishnavite alwars who sang their hymns in the seventh and eighth centuries. The artists have indeed succeeded in the subtle modelling of poses and forms and in putting forth the benign aspect of Siva as delineated in the Tamil classical literature that had preceeded the artists. I have tried to draw the attention of the readers to this aspect of Saiva Siddhanata Philosophy of Tamil Nadu by quoting a few lines of Tamil poetry within the limited space of one page of general information at the beginning of each chapter, besides occasional references to it in the descriptions of images. Earlier writers on South Indian bronze images have not at all referred to this influence or their relations to the Tamil literature. I wish that this aspect will be taken up in future works written on South Indian Images of Gods.

6. In respect of a few idols namely cat numbers 13,14,31 and 32 documentation of the images is available in the inscriptions on walls of temples. In many cases, the sources of the idols, their get up of the forms and stylistic features such as Skandamala, Tudi, Pendant, Triveli and siraschakra have generally been relied upon in assigning the period. They have also been mentioned at appropriate places.

Thanjavur,
30th April 1983

S. Rathnasabapathy,
Curator Art Gallery,

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THE CATALOGUE

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CHAPTER I

VINAYAGAR IMAGES: GENERAL INFORMATION

Vinayagar, the elephant-faced God, is otherwise known as Ganesa, Ganapati, Vignesvara and more popularly, as Pillaiyar1 (the 'great child') in Tamil Nadu. He is the first of two sons of Siva and Parvati, the other being Subrahmanya or Murugan Vignesvara is the remover of all obstacles in ordinary life and the embodiment of wisdom and might. At the commencement of any undertaking, the orthodox Hindu of any persuasion offers prayers to this deity to bless him with success. The author invokes the blessings of the *Kalaikkuta-pillaiyar* in the compilation of this descriptive catalogue of the Hindu icons in bronze and sculptures in stone in the Art Gallery.

The conception and delineation of the majestic form of Ganesa are the symbolic representation of the primordial sound *"Om"*, the beginning of the universe, energy, power and humour, all combined in one. Thirty-two forms of Ganapati are known to exist. He can have as many as eleven arms (including the proscis.) One main variation is the *Valamsuli Vinayagar* with the probscis turned right instead of the usual left. The five images in the collections of the Art Gallery Cat. Nos. 1 to 5 are the most common forms. The sitting form of the bronze image Cat. 4 can be found everywhere in stone throughout the length and breadth of the south.

There is no pointed reference to the elephant-faced deity of Ganapati among the Vedic Gods.[2] However one version of the legend is that the great epic of Mahabharata was written by Ganesa with his broken right tusk to the dictation of Vyasa its author. The broken right tusk is found in all images of Vinayagar.

The beginnings of Ganapati worship in this part of the country are lost in the mists of prehistory. There is a growing opinion that it was there even from the Sangam age. As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, scholars affirm that Ganesa worship began by the 4th or 5th Century A.D. This was intensified only with the conquest of the Western Chalukyas by the Pallavas during the 7th Century A.D. Siruthonda Nayanar, one of the sixty-three devotees of Siva, and the commander of the Pallava army, seized an image of Ganapati from Vatapi (now in the Maharashtra State) as a token of his victory and installed it in the Ganapatipuram temple, Tiruchenkattangudi village, Thanjavur District in Tamil Nadu. In the temples built by the early Cholas, Pillaiyar was only a *parivara deva* (tutelary deity[3]) and no separate sanctum was built for Him. Whatever may be the view of historians and scholars regarding the antiquity of worship of the God in Tamil Nadu, the fact remains that Pillaiyar worship was in vogue from early times and that he had

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become the most adored and familiar deity in the south from the Pallava period for more than a thousand years. One can therefore find His image worshipped in the nooks corners of India. A village in Tamil Nadu may not possess a Temple built for any god; but certainly an image of pillaiyar, in the sitting form-Cat No.4., can often be found under the green wood tree.

Ganapati is also the Lord of the Ganas that keep dancing Siva company. Tandu who has codified Siva's *Tandava Karanas* by careful observation, belongs to the dancing group of *Ganas*. But Ganapati was an actual performer and a participant of the *Sandya* (evening) *Tandava* of Siva. Nirutha Ganapati or the dancing image of Vinayakar, Which is a very rare pose, can be seen in the stone sculpture collections of the Art Gallery. The creation of the dancing aspect to Gods, Vinayakar, Nataraja, Krishna, Kali (Parvati) and others in the Hindu pantheon was to make God-devotion, pleasant and refreshing.

Note:- (1) Pillaiyar is the term used in epigraphs to denote the image of Vinayakar in Tamil Nadu; for example- **Parivara-Alayathu** Pillaiyar-the Pillayar of the circum-ambulatory passage mentioned in the epigraphs.

(2) Ganesa, corresponding to Agni-Brihaspati, "Lord of Hosts" (i.e, of the Mruts, the Breaths, the power of the soul) in the Rig Veda and Skanda represent respectively the Sacerdotium (brahma) and Regnum (Ksatra), the "hosts" being those of commons (visa). Ganesa's elephant's head corresponds to the "elephantine glory" (hasti. varcas) and "force" attributed to the Sun and to Brihaspati in the Atharva Veda. Thus Ganesa is not, as often stated, a concept of popular origin, "but of hieratic origin. Cf. also Alice Getty, Ganesa, Oxford 1926-AKC".

"In the Yajnyavalkya-smriti Vinayaka is appointed as chief of Siva's Ganas. His job is to create difficulties in the performance of sacrifices. His mother is Ambika-Parvati. He has to be placated keep him out of mischief."

In the course of His assimilation into Aryan worship, the character of Ganesa changed. From being an evil and inauspicious deity he became an auspicious one; so much so that every ceremony has to begin with his invocation.

"Sociologically, the Saivite gods may have been non-Aryans who resolutely opposed Aryan worship; or they may have been the gods (if not tribal leaders) of the non-Aryans. In the course, of time, they stopped harassing Yajnya worship or destroying Yajnic sacrifices. The two cultures became reconciled. In the process, the non-Aryan deities became absorbed into Aryan worship, and the character of the gods changed and became auspicious."

Iconography of the Hindu Buddhists and Jains R.S. Gupte, M.A, Phd.

(3) Vide note (1) above.

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VINAYAGAR

Cat. 1. VINAYAGAR OR GANESH

Jambavanodai-Tiruturaipoondi Tk.
9th-10th Century A.D.
ht. Total: 38cm. without Ped: 28cm.
Wt: 5-900 Kg.
A.G. Br. No. 136

I

The image is a treasure trove find, unearthed from a channel in the above Village during the year 1967. The image stands in *Samabhanga* on a circular *padmapeedam* attached to a square *bhadrapeedam* with tenons to support a *prabhavali*. It has an *ardhoraka* with side folds and median loop. The legs have heavy anklets and the *padasaras* are present, The belly is not pronouncedly big. The *yajnopavita* is of cloth and double stranded, in indication of bachelorhood; *udara-bandha* is broad and of precious stones. A broad *kasumalai* is the necklace decorating the neck. The upper two arms carry in the most natural way, a small *ankusa* (the elephant's goad) on the right hand and pasa (a small noose) in the left hand. The lower right arm is bent and is holding the broken tusk, with the pointed portion still inside the palm. The lower left arm has the wood apple, which the elephant's trunk is touching by a twist towards the left. The left tusk is fully present and the broken right tusk is just indicated. The head, with its third eye is typically elephant-like including thenaturally spread

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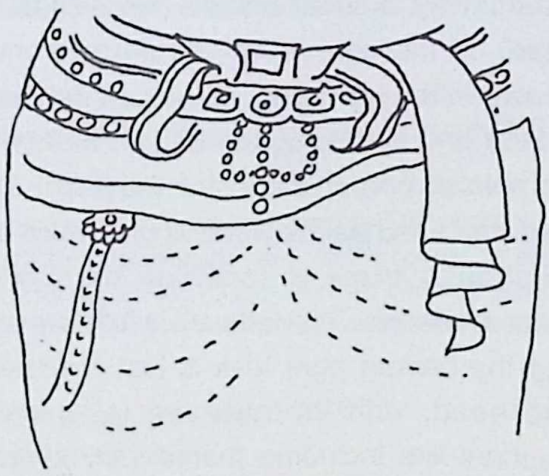
winnow-like ears. A small *karandamakuta* is worn like a cap in tier on the head. An elegant lotus *siraschakra* fits close to the back of the head.

This image is comparable with the *Ganesa* bronzes illustrated by sri. Sivaramamurti and Mr. Barret. But our image is quite different from those figured by Barret, which hail from Koneriraja puram (969-977), from Pudukkottai Museum. (first half of 10th Century A.D.), from Tiruvengadu (11th Century A.D.), and from Pallavanesvaram (1000 A.D.). From the very natural appearance of both the present specimen, and that from Velanganni, especially with reference to the realistic elephant's head and simple weapons like the goad and the noose (pasa) carried in a natural way, the date of this Ganesa may be assigned to a late phase of the early Chola period, namely, the end of 10th Century A.D.). The image can be ranked as one of the finest early Chola Ganesas.



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III

Cat. 2. VINAYAGAR OF GANESA

Madukkur - Pattukkottai. Tk.
12th Century A.D.
Ht. Total: 52 cm. without Ped: 30.5 cm.
Wt: 12.900 Kg.
A.G. Br. No. 158.

The deity stands in *abhanga* on a *padmapeedam* attached to a *bhadrapeedam* with holes for attachment during procession, and with a *prabhavali* of 15 separate flames, each with five tongues. The image was a treasure trove find unearthed in the year 1964.

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IV

The image is similar to Ganesa described above in Cat. No.1 The stomach is more pronounced and hanging down. The front portion of the head and the elephant's proboscis are consequently thrown more forward. The *siraschakra* is conventionalised. *Bahulamala* overflows on either shoulder with a streamer at right angles to it. Three necklaces adorn the neck. *Yajnopavita* of five strands can be noticed, with one of the narrower stands near the right armpit. A waist girdle of three strands encircles the pot-like belly above. A low skirt encircles the loins with elongated folds on the sides and a square median loop. Anklets and *padasaras* mark the legs. From the conventional appearance of the decorations and apparel, this image may be assigned to a very late phase of the Chola period, probably after the 12th Century A.D.

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Cat. 3. VINAYAGAR

Thanikkottam - Tiruturaipoondi Tk.
13th - 14th Century A.D.
ht. Total : 52cm. without Ped: 39 cm.
Wt. 13.500 Kg.
A.G. Br. No. 232

The image was a treasure trove unearthed in the above village in the year 1973. The god stands in *abhanga* on a *padmapeedam* attached to a *bhadrapeedam* with holes for securing in processions and with tenons to support a *prabhavali*, which was not available in the finds.

The figure under description is similar to the one described earlier in Cat. No.2. Likewise the stomach is very pronounced; the front portion of the head and the elephant's proboscis are consequently thrown more forward. The left tusk is longer and jutting out prominently, while the right tusk is shown broken. *Siraschakra* at the back of this image is broken and its long stump is visible behind. *Bahulamala* which is presented bolder, flows down the shoulders with a single streamer *(skandamala)* at right angles to it on either side. The nipples are more pronounced. In addition to the side folds of the undergarment, a long fold of the cloth hangs down in the centre, between the thighs, while the Ganesa image described earlier in Cat. No.2. has no such central tassel.

The decorative features and the iconographic form of the image under description are the same as that of the Ganesa described earlier in Cat. No. 1 & 2. Aesthetically, the legs which are short and stout, go well with the entire torso. Compared with the image in Cat. No. 2, the image which still carries with it, the pleasing aspect of the elephant form of god, has to be assigned a slightly later period, viz., postChola period in the early phase of Vijayanagar art.

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Cat. 4. VINAYAGAR OR GANESA

Kadalangudi-Nannilam Tk.
17th Century A.D.
Ht: 6 cm.
Wt: 0.055 Kg.
A.G. Br. No. 126.

This small Bronze piece was meant probably for worship in the house. It was a treasure trove find unearthed during the year 1964 along with six other bronze pieces. Of these, four were miniatures, vide Cat. No. 6,17, and 24.

The deity is seated on an oval *padmapeedam* with the belly resting on the *padmapeedam* between two short, stout, bent legs, his whole attitude suggesting the difficulties of squatting for a fat person. A low *karandamakuta* rests on the head. A big *siraschakra* can be seen behind. The ears are spread winnow-like, but are definitely elephant's ears. The contents of the four arms are the same as that of Ganesas described before in Cat.No. 1 & 2. Three close fitting necklaces adorn the neck. A *yajnopavita* branches off in three strands, the central one being broad. Instead of *naga yajnasutra* he wears an ordinary *yajnopavita* of cotton fabric. A wide upper cloth *(uttariya)* is tied tightly around the stomach and its edges are seen flowing on either side behind.

The navel *(nabhi)* is large and deep. An undercloth, tied in the usual *kachcha* fashion, is suggested by a prominent pleat behind. Bracelets adorn the wrists and *padasaras* the legs. The workmanship of this image suggests the Nayak period of Vijayanagara School.

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CHAPTER II

SUBRAHMANYA - GENERAL INFORMATION.

Son of Siva and Parvati, Subrahmanya[1] is the most popular and adored deity of the South. He is best known by the name of Murugan (Tamil) which means the most beautiful and the valiant. He bears innumerable other names signifying the different aspects of beauty, valour, and wisdom, with which he is associated. Some of the more important names indicating him are Vadivelan the lovely one bearing the Vel (the spear), Kumaran-the eternal youth and son of Siva, Arumugan-the God with six faces. Devasenapathi-the generalissimo of the celestials, Skanda-the transcendant and Karthikeya-Siva's son nursed by the six Karthick women (pleids).

The last name is the current one by which he is most known in North India. He is a lesser deity there-more often a bechelor, his worship strictly avoided by married women.

Scholars agree that the worship of this form of God was pre-vedic in evolution and therefore does not find a place in the deities of the early vedic pantheon. It is accepted that Skanda mentioned in the Rig Veda is a general term to denote the Brahman, the supreme being and does not relate to Subrahmanya, of the South. Whatever may be his status in the vedic times, the great epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, the puranas2 and Kumarasambava of Kalidasa extol him as the heroic son of Siva and the great commander of the celestials who were saved from the troubles of the mighty asura Tarakasure or Soorapadma, the later name by which he is better known in Tamil Nadu and in the Skandapuranam.

The nature of God worship and its evolution takes shape in relation to the cultural associations and natural surroundings of the people; the Gods are endowed with the virtues and weaknesses of the people where the worship evolved in the dim past. This is perhaps the scientific and rational view apart from the later influences of religions from other sources or regions Taken in this view without a bias, predilections of the Tamil people towards Muruga worship with all the frolic and revelries of the primitive hill tribes, the association of the peacock as His vehicle, the simple spear and the romance of the God with the hunter girl, Valli, as portrayed in the Tamil *Sangam* Lyrical poetry-all confirm the above view that the worship of the deity was an evolution from the soil-the Southernmost part of the Indian peninsula which had remained free from the influence of the Vedic Aryans for a longer period than the rest of India. That Subrahmanya, Murugan of the Tamil Nadu was a pre-Aryan deity in its beginnings further evidenced by the ample and exclusive references, to this form of the deity in the

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earliest Tamil *Sangam* literature and the still earlier Tamil grammar, Tol-kappiam which have been assigned a period several centuries before the birth of Christ. According to the early Tamil literature Murugan was the presiding deity of the *Kurunji* (hill and forest) country. The fact that his famous temples are all still on hill tops shows that he is connected with the ancient tree, serpent worship and sylvan deities.

Subrahmanya idols are not found in large numbers in museums. This is probably due to the fact that during the Chola period the Saivaites concentrated principally on the worship of Siva alone. No attempt was therefore made for the multiplication of Subrahmanya forms or idols as in the case of Siva and Parvati images. However it should be noted that an image of child Subrahmanya, "Skanda", was included and formed an integral part of Siva worship in the image of Somaskanda3 found in all Siva temples of the South.

Out of the five images described in this chapter, Subrahmanya (Cat.No.5) is a rare piece having been endowed with the bow and arrow. No. 6, Child Subrahmanya riding on his peacock is a miniature under household worship. Cat. No.9 is the usual iconographic form of Subrahmanya standing in *samabhanga* with *karandamakuta*, the lower right hand in *abhayahasta* and the left in *varada hasta*. A separate long vel (spear) is poised between the chest and the *abhayahasta* on the right.

The Tamil name "Murugan" itself connotes beauty, beauty of all kinds; His association with the peacock as his vehicle seems to proclaim that the beauty of the lord includes and surpasses all kinds of beauty that are seen in nature. In short, it may be stated that "Beauty", is truth; Truth beauty, that is all ye need to know on earth" was the earliest conception of the Tamil people in the worship of God.

Notes: 1. "Su" means happily wedded to "brahma gnana", -the knowledge of the supreme being; "brahmanya" means-one who tends to the spiritual growth of the aspirant. Thus the special feature of the worship of Subrahmanya is that the worshipper will be endowed with the super divine knowledge of gnana. According to the legends, the son taught the spiritual truth even to his father. His simple spear, the "Vel", is synonymous with gnana Sakthi, the celestial power of gnana or divine wisdom and destroyer of all evils and ignorance.

2. Skandapuranam is the legend which narrates at length the origin and the glories of the heroism of the deity springing forth from Siva in the form of fire Agni) to save the celestial Gods from the clutches. Of the terrible and invincible Soorapadma-asura and his brothers who were inhabiting the southern seas. It is a very voluminous legend containing about one and a half lakhs of slokas. Almost all the major legends about celestials and rishis are incorporated in this purana

3. Vide chapter VIII infra

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VII

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VIII

Cat. 5. SUBRAHMANYA WITH CONSORTS VALLI AND DEIVANAI

Tiruvengadu-Sirkali Tk.
11the Century A.D.

	Subrahmanya	Valli	Deivanai
Ht. Total:	97 cm.	79 cm.	79 cm.
without Ped:	86 cm.	71 cm.	71 cm.
Wt:	83 Kg.	43 Kg.	43 Kg.
A.G.Br. Nos.	167	168	169

This group along with thirteen other pieces were treasure trove finds in Tiruvengadu Village, unearthed in the year. 1967. Inscription No. 470 of 1918 of Rajendra Chola (1012-1044 A.D.) on the Western wall of the mandapa in Tiruvengadu Temple refers to presentation of lands for the worship of "Devargal Devanayakapperumal" (Subrahmanya).

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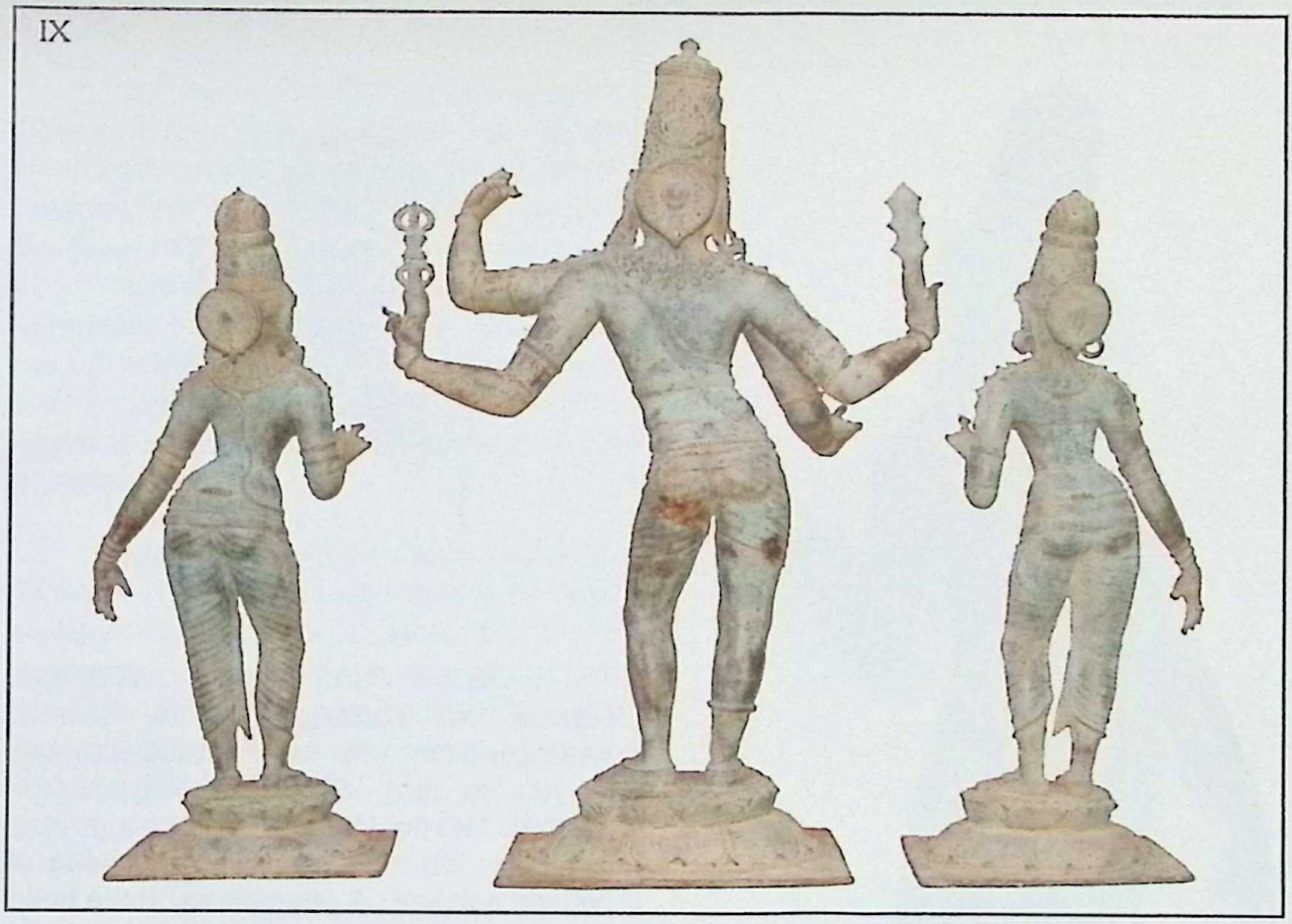
IX



Subrahmanya is standing in *tribhanga* on a circular *padmapeedam (visvapadma)* over a flat rectangular plate, He has four hands, the front two hands are in position to hold a bow and arrow, and the two back hands hold *sakti* and *vajra* (thunderbolt). A *kiritamakuta* crowns the head with *siras chakra* behind. Double rows of eleven ringlets emerge in a semicircle on the nape of the neck, and a central pendant hangs from the back of the necklace The *yajnopavita* is of six strands in two rows. A highly ornamented girdle encircles the waist. Elaborate *bahulamalas* fall down the shoulders, with four vertical streamers *(skandamala)* issuing at right angles, one of which, on the left shoulder, is a look of hair and, on the right, the tassels of the strings of the necklace. The ornaments of the arms are completed by angadas of arabesque work, *bajibandhas* and wristlets of *kolusu* type. *Makarakundalas* hang from distended lobes of the ears. The third eye is marked on the forehead. The *ardhoraka* (a short skirt) moulded in wavy lines with an elaborate waist girdle and *kiritimukha* (clasp and tassels with side loops) clothes the thighs. There is a *kachcha* (pleat) tucked behind. A *virakkazal* is worn on the right leg; *padasaras* on the feet and rings on all the toes except the middle toe are some of the decorative features of this remarkable image of early Chola workman-ship. It may be noted that this image of Subrahmanya has been endowed with bow and arrow while generally the right hand is *abhayahasta* and the left *varadahasta* in a *samabhanga* pose. (vide Cat. No.9.).

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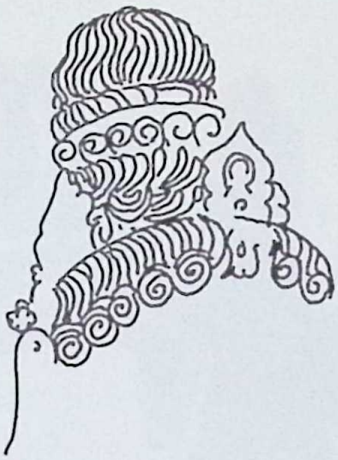
X



On his right, the coy maid Valli stands in *abhanga* on a similar *padmapeedam* with the right leg firm and the left leg bent. She is bending towards her lord. Her right hand hangs like a *govala*, while her left is in *kataka* in the pose of holding a flower. A *jatamakuta* on the head with *siraschakra* at the back and a semicircular array of eight ringlets of hair behind, *patrakundalas* in the ears, *bahulamala* with vertical streamer, *skandamala* on either shoulder *kuchabandha* of the brassiere type, four necklaces, *tiru* on the throat, and *channavira* on the torso, three wristlets, one *bajibandha* and *keyura* of arabesque work for each arm are clearly seen. The close undergarment moulded in wavy line is wrapped round the legs, with elongated central folds, a pleat on the left side and waist girdle with clasp and tasselated loops. Double *padasaras* complete the decorative features of this deity.

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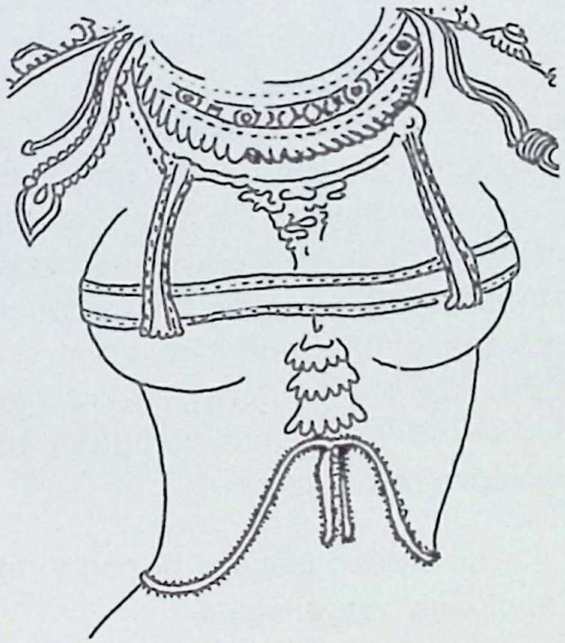
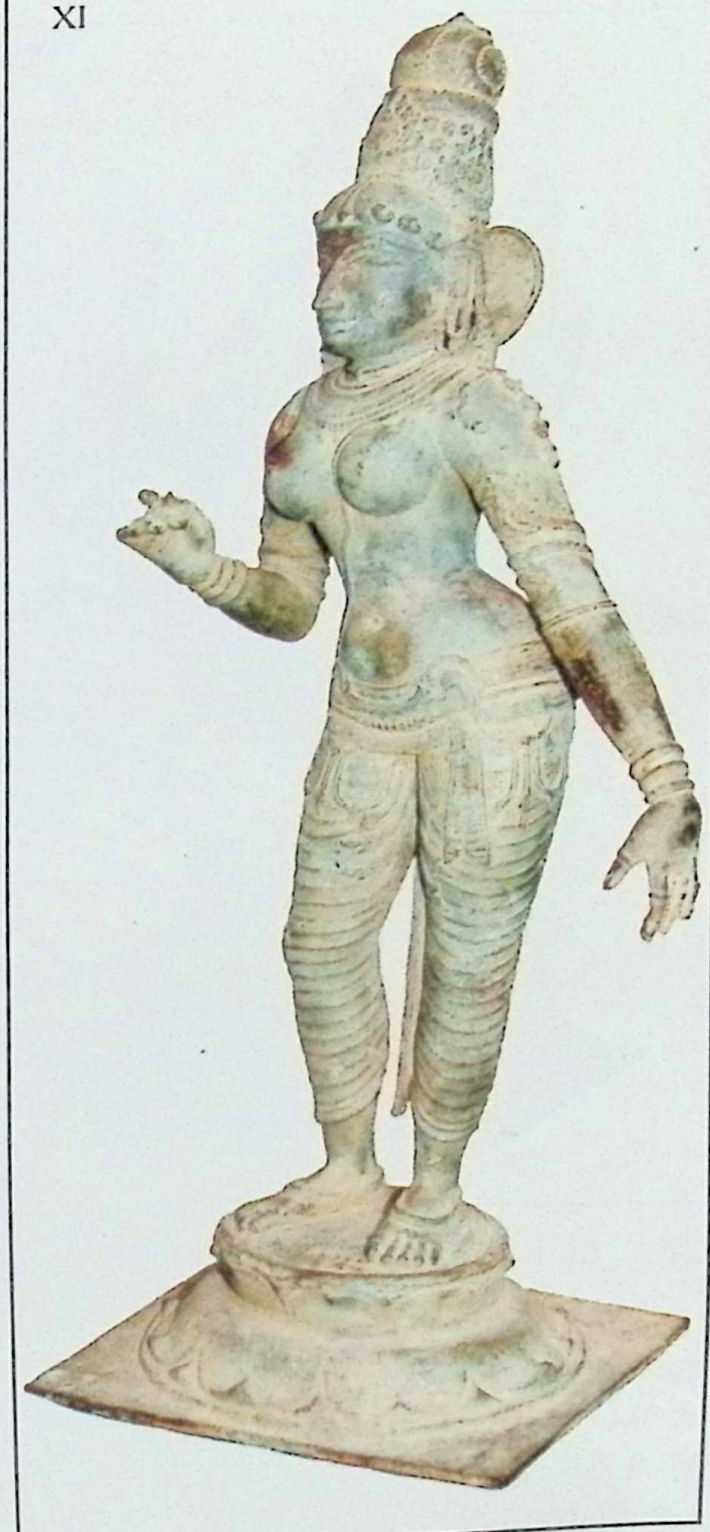
To Subrahmanya's left stands Deivanai who does not differ very much from Valli, except for her slanting position towards her Lord from the left side, the positions of the hands and the absence of *kuchabandha*. She wears *makara-kundalas*; her right hand is in *kataka* and her left hand is in *govala*. Her waist reveals *triveli*. Like her lord, she is also of the classical Chola period (Probably at the time of Rajendra Chola I).

The art is lively and realistic. Observe, for instance, the subtle contrast made out by the early Chola sculptor in the delineation and presentation of the two consorts: Valli, the hunter girl, and Deivanai, the daughter of Indra.



XI



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Cat. 6. BALASUBRAHMANYA

Kadalangudi-Nannilam Tk.
15th-16th Century A.D.
Ht. Total: 15cm. without Ped: 12cm.
Wt: 0-700 Kg.
A.G. Br. No. 129

The image is a treasure trove find unearthed in the year 1967. Intended for household worship, this is a good specimen of child Subrahmanya seen riding on his usual peacock *vahana* with its tail shown horizontally at the back. The deity wears a *karandamakuta* with a *siraschakra* behind, *patra-kundalas* in his ears; bahulamalas on the shoulders streamer *(skandamala)* on the right side and tudi on the left. Five round necklaces adorn the neck; *yajnopavita* of five strands passes across the torso, one strand going below the waist line. *Udarabandha* is present. *Ardhoraka* and median loops have also been provided; *padasaras* and *bringipadas* adorn the legs.

Subrahmanya is elegantly. seated on the peacock, with his left leg tucked up and the right hanging down in front. The ends of his sash descend on each side of the peacock. The hissing serpent in the peacock's beak may be noticed. The bird's tail stretched out behind adds grace to the entire composition. The deity has four hands, the right upper holding the *vel* (spear) and the upper left supporting the *vairayudha* by means of the first two fingers in *Kartarimudra*. The right lower arm in *abhaya* and the left in *kataka* complete the iconography of this figure.

The stylistic features belong to the period of early Vijayanagara.

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Cat. 7. SKANDA-CHILD SUBRAHMANYA

Tiruvidaimarudur-Kumbakonam Tk.
12th-13th Century A.D.
Ht. Total: 25 cm. without Ped: 20 cm.
Wt: 1.950 Kg.
A.G. Br. No. 43

The child Subrahmanya stands on a padmapeedam holding lotus flowers on each of the hands. The head dress is kesabandha which is held in position by a jewelled fillet and flowers with curls of hair adorning the face. Similar curls of hair in semicircular array and a central pendant hanging from the necklaces are seen behind. Large patrakundalas adorn the distended ear lobes. Of the two necklaces decorating the torso, one is a jewelled set with a central gem. Three girdles, one of which is kinkini (bells), are provided with tassels on the sides. Two anklets of gajjai complete the decorative features of this nude child form.

An image of the child Subrahmanya of this type with lotus flowers in both the hands, is presented in a dancing pose in between Siva and Parvati in all Somaskanda groups, vide Cat Nos. 36 etc. This image was wrongly included as Skanda of a Somaskanda set from the same source vide. Cat No. 37, If, however, this was a Skanda of a Somaskanda group, Siva and Parvati images of that set should have been relatively large sized.

On stylistic features, the image will have to be assigned a late Chola period, viz. 12th or 13th Century A.D.

XIII

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XIV

XV

Cat. 8. SUBRAHMANYA

Thanjavur Dist.
Locality not known.
18th -19th Century A.D.
Ht: Total 20 cm.
Wt: 0.650 kg.
A.G. Br. No. 12.

This hollow copper figure, open at the back was presumably intended to be carried in procession attached to a plank or a pole during **Subrahmanya** bajanai (chorus singing in the streets.)

During holy baths and ceremonial functions connected with sacred rivers, tanks, seas, etc, it is usual to carry the image of Gods of all important temples in the area to such holy spots in the rivers and dip **small images of Gods** representing the temple at a prearranged time. The present small hollow image could have been one of the latter kind, though some special features are absent.

The upper hands of this **Subrahmanya** image **hold Sakti** and Vajra; the lower hands are in abhoya and ***varada. Kiritamakuta*** is worn on the head. Stud kuntalas in the ears, two necklacesone with pathakkam and a seeming channavira extension-adorn the torso. All these are the usual iconographic features of **Subrahmanya.** A broad under-garment, a big waist girdle and tassels and a circular mark on the forehead, are the features of this specimen; a modern work, but of distinct iconographic value.

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XVI

Cat. 9. SUBRAHMANYA WITH CONSORTS

Tiruvidaimarudur-Kumbakonam Tk.
19th Century A.D.

	Subrahmanya	Valli	Deivanai
Ht. Total:	53 cm.	48 cm.	48 cm.
Without ped:	43 cm.	38 cm.	38 cm.
Wt:	14.600 Kg.	11.700 Kg.	12.300 Kg.
A.G. Br. No.	65	66	67

This is a complete and good set of the group as a specimen of modern work. Subrahmanya stands on a double tier platform on ***padmapeedam*** with a square base. There is a certain amount of rigid symmetry which starts from the row of *karandas* in the ***makuta*** on the head and ends with the angular disposition of the pairs of legs and feet. Behind the ***Karandamakuta*** is a large *siraschakra*. There is no attempt to show the locks of hair, *Makarakundalas* adorn the ears. An extensive ***bahulamala*** flows on the shoulders with a pair of streamers, *skandamala*, at right angles to it on either shoulder. A six-stranded

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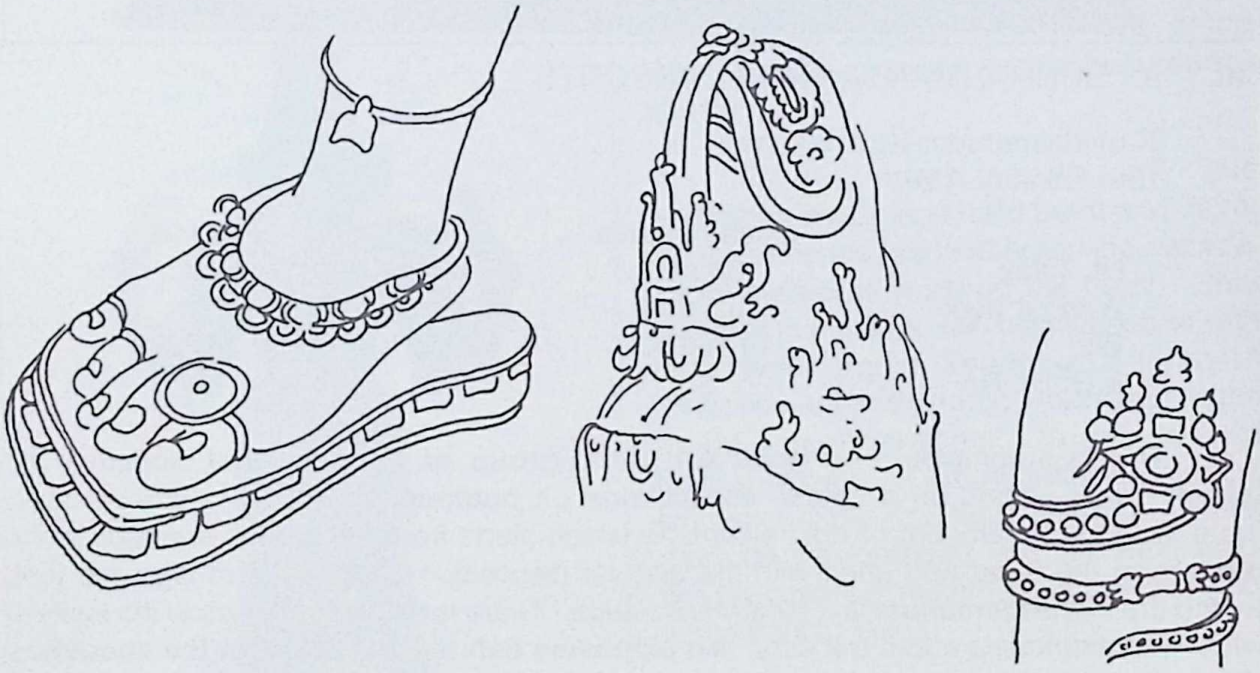
yajnopavita is knotted at the breast, below which it bifurcates into two courses of three strands each, both proceeding towards opposite sides of the abdomen. This creates a false impression of *channavira*. The *nabhi* (navel) is triangularly sectioned. The upper arms carry *vel* (sakti) and *vajra*. The lower arms are in *abhayahasta* and *varadahasta* respectively. There is no armlet, only a wristlet. The palm marks are emphatically indicated as a chased lotus design. An elaborate under-garment is wrapped round the legs, which have wavy stencilled lines and indented side folds. A waist girdle with tasselated side folds and with median loops clearly marked, and *kolusus* for the legs are the decorative features of this modern, though attractive, specimen.

The deity is flanked on either side by his consorts Valli on his right and Deivanai on his left. Both are inclined towards the God, standing on a similar *padmapeedam* with the nearer hand to God in *kataka* holding their respective flowers: lotus for Valli and *nilotpalam* for Deivanai. The alternative hands hang like the tail of a cow *(govala)*. A *karandamakuta* on the head with *siraschakra* behind, a *kuchabandha* thrown above the breasts suggesting a blouse, two necklaces, triangular nabhi mark two armlets, one wristlet, and *getti kolusu* are the common decorative features of both the consorts. *Patrakundalas* decorate Valli's ears while *makarakundalas* adorn Deivanai's ears. A circular *tilaka* mark can be seen on the forehead of each image. The junction of hip and torso of both figures is indicated by lines cut on their sides, a rather drastic stylistic expedient. The sculptor probably was more concerned with convention and *dhyana* than with the aesthetics of art a characteristic tendency of modern art.



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CHAPTER III

NANDI - GENERAL INFORMATION

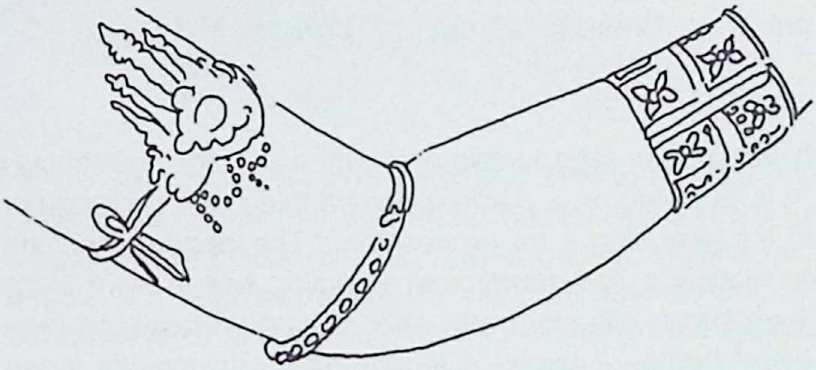
It is obligatroy for every Siva temple to install a Nandi image in the reclining form of a bull in front of Siva. Even in respect of other Gods, viz. Ganesa, Muruga, Parvathi, etc., where separate vehicles for the Gods have been provided, Nandi is installed occasionally as a substitute. Because of his association with spiritual wisdom, he is given the honourable title of 'Iswara' and called Nandikeswara. In the early Tamil literature the word 'Nandi' is synonymous with Siva. The form of Nandi is always in a reclining position and never posed in the standing form. A detailed description of the different forms of Nandi is given in Cat. No. 11 under Adikaranandi.

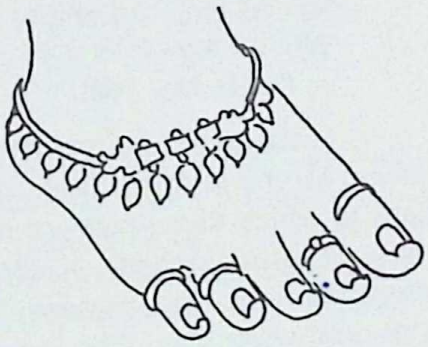
2. Some scholars think that the evolution of religion began with two main aspects: hero-worship on the one side and element-worship on the other side. The hero-worshippers have regarded the bull, which is the earliest animal to be tamed and domesticated, with great respect and adopted it as an outward symbol of an unseen, intimate relation with Siva, while the swift-moving horse was the emblem of those who were element worshippers. This totemic emblem-the Bull-has thus survived the ages to become the sacred vehicle of Siva besides being the foremost devotee of Siva. It is a significant fact that the Bull has also been figured prominently in the Mohenjadaro seals where it may be considered as a link between the dim past and present-day Saivaism.

3. Tirumal's (Vishnu's) association with the mount of Siva may be mentioned here

''தடமதில்கள் மூன்றும் தழல் எரித்த அந்நாளில்
இடபமாய் தாங்கினான் திருமால்காண் சாழலோ''

On the day the three forts were burnt down (by Siva) it wasTirumal (Vishnu) who bore him through" Tiruvachagam-Manikkavasagar





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Cat. 10. NANDI OR RISHABHA - THE CELESTIAL BULL - VEHICLE OF SIVA.

Tiruvengadu - Sirkali Tk.
11 th Century A. D.
Ht: 38 cm. Length: 41 cm. Breadth: 27 cm.
Wt: 30 Kg.
A. G. Br. No. 162.

Rishabha is recumbent with all the four legs folded and with ears alert, as though waiting for the orders of the Lord. It is reclining on a *padmapeedam* fixed to a rectangular plate to which four rings are added for **securing** it for procession. The **dewlap** and the hump are pronounced. A necklace of beads ***(go-mani)*** and a jingling bell in front hang round the neck. It is caparisoned by a heavy silk cloth with decorated girth fastened by a knot on the left side. The bull has short horns. A girdle of jingling bells encircles its rump. The rishabha is shown as alert and attentive, Siva's true servant and devotee.

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Cat. 11. ADHIKARA NANDI WITH CONSORT

Melaiyur - Sirkali Tk.
13th - 14th Century A. D.

	Nandi in Siva's form	Consort
Ht. Total:	91 cm.	81 cm.
Without Ped:	71 cm.	61 cm.
Wt:	43.200 Kg.	21.500 Kg.
A.G. Br. No.	28	29

An interesting icon for study. During the *Brahmotsavam* festival (annual festival) of Siva shrines, one day is marked out for Adhikaranandi's worship, when he receives the respect due to Siva himself. He is usually installed in the *gopura vasal*. There are five nandis, viz., *Brahmanandi, Vishnunandi, Mahanandi, Adhikaranandi* and *Nandiavartanam*. ***Brahmanandi*** of stone will be by the side of the mulavar in the sanctum. *Vishnunandi* of metal will be in full form in the *mahamandapam*. *Mahanandi* will be outside in stone.

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Adhikaranandi will be in Siva's form installed in the *gopuravasal* on the right side facing Siva in *anjali* pose as door guardian between *Vishnunandi* and *Mahanandi*. He also carries the rod kattiam on his shoulders (not present in this image). *Nandiavartanam* is represented in the *garbhagriha* as eight nandis, underneath a *mula-linga* which has the form of square seat. This is rarely represented.

The form of Adhikaranandi is not found in all temples. Examples may be seen in the Kapalisvara temple Mylapore (Madras), Tirumullaivasal as well as the present one from Melaiyur.

He is standing in *abhanga*, on a separate *padmapeedam* attached to a common *bhadrapeedam*. In front of the *bhadrapeedam* stand the *dhanapati* couple with hands in *anjali*. The maker or donor of these images is represented here with his wife. The *dhanapati* has his undergarment in two lengths, one hanging further down the leg, as in the case of Irugappa's sculptures from Tiruparuttikunram of 14th Century A.D.

A high *jatamakuta* with the crescent moon and the serpent on it, *makarakundala* in the right ear and *patrakundala* in the left are all of the attributes of Siva images. *Tudi* on the right shoulder in a loop and streamers on the left are features of the post-Chola period. An undergarment of *ardhoraka* type with back kachcha waist girdle with

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simhamukha clasp, median loop with side streamers and padasaras on the feet have been provided as usual.

The third eye which is special to Siva images is engraved. The upper hands bear the axe and the antelope. The lower hands are held in *anjali* with a garland of *rudraksha* beads between the palms; the latter feature of the pose distinguishes the image as Adhikara Nandi and not as Siva.

Adhikaranandi is accompanied by his consort, who is similarly standing in *abhanga* on a *padmapeedam* attached to the common *bhadrapeedam.* A high *karandamakuta* on the head with eight ringlets of locks of hair adorned by a *siraschakra*, empty ear-lobes, the string of *tiru* closely round the neck, two necklaces, a sash-like *yajnopavita*, armlet, *bajibandha*, wristlet, undergarment extremely diaphanous in schematic folds and waves with long median tassellated ends, waist girdles of exquisite and intricate ruby work in bow fashion, the pleats clearly marked on the back side, and padasaras on the feet are some of the decorative features of the consort. On stylistic grounds both the Nandi and his consort goddess take a high place, almost as a master piece of the transition from the late Chola to early Vijayanagara. The portraiture of the *dhanapati* (donor) on the pedestal is a distinct feature of the early Vijayanagara technique. A date 1300-1350 A.D. is probable.

Cat. 12. ADHIKARANANDI WITH CONSORT.

Tirumullaivasal - Sirkali Tk.
14th-15th Century A.D.

	Nandi in Siva form	Devi
Ht. Total :	91 cm.	84 cm.
without Ped:	79 cm.	64 cm.
Wt:	39-400 Kg.	25-150 Kg.
		peedam 16-675 Kg.
A.G. Br. No.	48	49

This piece is similar to the other Adhikaranandi (Cat No. II) described above except that it is more stylised. The consort's head is slightly inclined away from her Lord while in the Adhikaranandi described earlier, he and his consort are more close to each other. The images stand on two separate *padmapeedams* attached to a single *bhadrapeedam*, with tenons, rings and holes for attachment in their processional rounds.

Adhikaranandi has as usual four hands, the upper with axe and antelope (missing) and the lower two folded in *anjali*, with a flower garland or rosary between. A high *jatamakuta*

KOVILOOR ANJA VAM
A. No. 1065

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decorated with a *chandrakala*, serpent, *datura* and flower, *siraschakra* behind, locks of hair in nine ringlets behind, *makarakundala* in the right ear and *patrakundala* in the left, flower garlands on either shoulder, streamer *(skandamala)* on either shoulder, four necklaces, a *yajnopavita* of three strands-and a fourth strand branching away, ornamental *udarabandha, keyura, bajibandha,* wristlets, *ardhoraka* with waist girdle, and *simhamukha* clasp, and a row of loops with bifurcated central tassels flowing over each thigh, the pleat of the *kachcha* at the back, *padasaras* and an elaborate row of six anklets for each ankle are the decoratlve features of this specimen of formalised art of the Vijayanagara artists of the 14th Century A.D.

Devi stands by his side in *tribhanga* with the right hand in *kataka* and the left hanging like *govala*. A high *karandamakuta* with *siraschakra* (a round flower only) and eight locks of ringlets behind, *makarakundalas* in both ears, a floral streamlet on either shoulder, five necklaces-one of which is the *tali*, a sash-like *yajnopavita,* three lines on the abdomen *(triveli)*, highly ornate *angada*, a simple *bajibandha*, three wristlets, *padasaras*, a highly ornate undergarment with drapery marked and lines incised, *makara* clasp, pleats of the cloth on the left side, median loop and tasselled edge hanging vertically are the decorative features of this Devi, who has also to be classed as early Vijaya nagara. The palm and the fingers of the left hand are out of proportion. The sculptor has exaggerated the *govala* specification of the *dhyana.* The beak-like nose; the ornate drapery, the high *karandamakuta* and the conventional *siraschakra*, coupled with the three lines on the abdomen, clearly indicate a Vijayanagara period.

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CHAPTER IV

SIVA - GENERAL INFORMATION

In the earliest prefigurations in South India, Siva is himself a hunter and is the father of Murugan (Subrahmanya) the revered hunter of the mountainous Country (Kurinji). He is referred to as the *Periyon*[1] (Grand Sire) in the early Tamil literature. Saivaite hymns and literature claim him as the exclusive God of the Tamils and Lord of all countries.[2] He is not a deity of destruction alone as conceived later on and as one of the Trinity, namely, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, with the separated functions of Creation, Preservation, and Destruction respectively; rather, He is a God of love, benignity and solace to humanity. Five functions, namely *Sristi* (Creation,) *Stithi* (Preservation,) *Samhara* (Dissolution,) *Tirobhava* (Veiling and rest for some time) and *Anugraha* (final Deliverance of the soul by his grace from all bondage) are the functions attributed to Him, according to the Saiva Siddhanta (Sudda Advaida) school of philosophy of the Tamils.

2. Scholars agree that the worship of Siva is the most ancient of the Indian Gods. Long before the Vedic age, He or His prototype appears in the Indus valley with a clear cut iconography which establishes His image and His Cult. This is of great significance for the light it sheds on certain later but vital religious concepts. In the Indus valley seals, seated in yogic pose, He is three-headed and occasionally one-headed. Surrounded by animals, with a deer adorning the base of the seat, He is their Lord, Pasupathi, a role in which he supersedes the ancient Mother Goddess. The iconographic features of Siva-Trisula (Trident),[3] the Primitive mace, the deer, [4] the matted hairlocks, ascetic meditative form and short skirts-are all primitive characteristics, which have defied time and have survived in the art of historic period in association with certain spiritual values.

3. That Siva was adopted by the later Indo-Aryans as the supreme One, and that the local divinities of the pre-Vedic India were integrated with the Vedic pantheon is best explained from the writings of Thiru T. A. Gopinath Rao, in his book *"Elements of Hindu Iconography."* An extract is reproduced here: One of the most interesting chapters of Hindu mythology is the history of Siva, the God of destruction of the Hindu Trinity. In Rig Veda, Vajasaneya Samhitha of the white yajurveda and the Atharva Veda, the word Siva meaning 'the auspicious' occurs as an epithet of Rudra, It is only Rudra (and not Siva), who is praised in all hymns as a malevolent deity causing death and disease among men and cattle and for attacking and damaging their enemies and their belongings.

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4. "He is throughout the Vedic period identified with Agni, From occupying the minor position of Agni, Rudra emerges into one of the supreme deities during the puranic period. In a number of places in the puranic literature, we see a sort of fierce Siva, and denounciation of Siva Cult. Daksha, in his rage, denounces Siva as the proud abolisher of rites and demolisher of barriers, such as by teaching the word of Vedas to sudras, as roaming about in cemetries attended by his hosts of Boodhas (Goblins) like a made man naked and with dishevelled hair, laughing, weeping, covered with ashes gathered from funeral pyres and wearing a garland of human skulls and ornament of bones. He pretends to be auspicious Siva (while in reality he is Asiva)". From these statements, we are led to think that Vedic India looked upon Siva as a lesser class deity and was not offering him any oblations along with Indra and other Gods. In order to bring out his omnipotence, Siva establishes for the first time His superiority over all other deities.5 This lowest of the Gods of the Vedic period gets above the level of the Vedic Gods at a later period and is reconciled with the later Vedic Hinduism.

5. "With its root deep in antiquity, the cult of this ancient God-Siva, grew with the march of time, like a mighty many branched banyan, nursing under its spreading shades, a variety of Siva sects and philosophies spear-heading a vast spiritual empire, which once extended from the southern most point of India to the Himalayas and from Indo-China to Indonesia. Siva's stature grew and His personality acquired many sided features, which are fully reflected in the vast literature that are available at present, particularly, in the bakti.cult of the south."

6. The most important of the major Siva concepts is where He is portrayed as a Maha-yogi in the uninterrupted communion with "His Self" which is His Universal soul; as such, He is wisdom incarnate. The yogic pose in the form of Dakshinamurthi symbolises the spiritual quest and the conquest of Self; and these constitute the very essence of the Indian religious thought and practice. With the exposition of this aspect of Siva, He became Dakshinamurthi, the supreme yogi and the teacher of spiritual knowledge. He is also the perennial fountain of music, from which innumerable streamlets, of Raga flow. He symbolises this aspect as Vinadhara Dakshinamurthi of which there are two beautiful bronzes in the Art Gallery (see Cat. Nos. 31 & 32).

7. Among the several aspects of this great God, Siva is universally beloved as Kalyanasundaramurthy (The Lord of Beauty); this romantic marriage form of Kalyanasundaramurthy and Parvathi with Vishnu and Lakshmi is found in the collections of the Art Gallery. (Vide Cat. No. 16).

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8. Siva and Parvathi are also the ideal couple deeply devoted and loving. They are often represented together or separately. In the former form the image, is known as Alinganamurthi-Siva in a tender melting mood of dalliance, embracing Uma. Such forms are available in the Art Gallery bronze collection (vide Cat. No. 24 & 25 - Chap. V). A legend narrates that Siva was so pleased with the devotion of Uma that he granted her a boon that she shall remain inseparable from him and received her on his left side, assuming combined form of half man and half woman (Ardhanariswara) symbolic of the principle of inseparable form of the man and the woman. This special aspect of Siva cult is particularly stressed and brought home to the worshipper endowing all images of Siva with a woman's ear ornament viz., the *thodu,* ie - the *patrakundala* while the other ear carries the *makarakundala* the man's ornament; this device serves to remind the devotees of Siva that Parvathi, His consort, forms part of Him.

9. Siva, as well as the Goddess Mother of the universe are strongly visualised as both terrible and benign, creative and destructive, and hideous, cruel and comely. Pairs of opposites are thus eminently qualified to represent the ultimate reality. In compliance with the propensities of man's imagination and emotion, the absolute is commonly personified in anthropomorphic representation for the purposes of worship while the principal object in the Central sanctum of a temple remained invariably in the "formless form" of Lingam.

10. Siva's mutually antagonistic functions and aspects are made evident by a number of names. These expressive designations have been reduced to five

A The Beneficent manifestation - Anugraha Moorthi.

B The Destructive manifestation - Samhara Moorthi.

C The Vagrant (Mendicant) - Bhikshatana Moorthi.

D The Lord of Dances (Narthana Moorthi--Nataraja) and

E The Great Lord (Maheswara Moorthi)

In Tamil Nadu, where worship is mostly concentrated on the benign aspect of Siva, the bronze images of Siva which are collected from the temples in this area or temple images which were buried in troubled times. quite naturally are in the form of Anugrahamoorthi, Bhikshatanamoorthi or Narthana moorthi. Even in respect of Bairava Siva, described in Cat. No.15, the image is of a benign nature though endowed with eight arms, holding terrible weapons with the central eye distendeal Nataraja, which is the best known Narthana moorthi, is described in Chapters 9 & 10 - included in Vol. II.

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11. As already stated in paragraph 9, the basic and most common central object of worship in Siva's shrines is the Lingam. This form of God can be traced back to the worship of primitive stone symbols as early as the neolithic period. Already at Mohenjadaro, the Lingam occurs side by side with other important symbols similar to those employed in later Indian iconography. It is only in very rare instances that we meet with the anthropomorphic representations set up as the principal deity in Siva temples. This form of Lingam and its worship have been taken to be the phallic worship, denoting the male creative energy of Siva and the female receptive energy of Uma. The evolution of such an aspect is a possibility; the primitive people of India could have shared with other nations of non-Aryan descent who inhabited the borders of Mediterranean Sea. Worship of Lingam of the present day may therefore be a survival of this aspect. This non - Aryan God, in form resembling a phallic emblem, seems to have been identified at a later period with the *Skamba* of Vedas. This *Skamba* was conceived as co-existence with the universe comprehensive in him the various parts of the material universe as also the abstract qualities such as tapas, faith, truth and cyclic flow of time. Here, we may recall the observations of thiru T.A. Gopinath Rao in his book on iconography, "Because it is established to be phallic in its nature, some may be inclined to consider Lingam worship obscene and immoral. There is nothing in it to be ashamed of. The two generative principles of the universe, Sivam and Sakthi, Purusha and Prakiriti, the father and mother of all Creation-the energy and matter of the physical scientist-are symbolised briefly in the form of Linga and its base. For the past two thousand years atleast, the Hindus, man and women, have been offering worship to this symbol of the great architectural universe without the least adverting to or feeling conscious of the so called obscenity of this pure symbol of father-hood and mother-hood of the supreme deity. To them, it is a symbol and nothing more."

NOTE:

1. பிறவாயாக்கைப் பெரியோன் கோவிலும் - சிலப்பதிகாரம்
   The Temple of the great Seer, who was never born
2. தென்னாடுடைய சிவனே போற்றி,
   எந்நாட்டவர்க்கும் இறைவா போற்றி மாணிக்கவாசகர் - திருவாசகம்
   Adore Siva the Lord of the south and of all countries
3. மூவிலை ஒருதாட் சூலம் ஏந்துதல்
   மூவரும் யானென மொழிந்தவாறே - பட்டினத்தார், திருவொற்றியூர்.
4. The deer was the food of the primitive hunter and it had to be saved from the wild animals - It signifies protection.
5. The polity of the vedas was the performance of sacrifices This was continued in the Upanishat period and the Brahmanas elaborated the Rituals. But at the same time, the worship of the many Gods was being given up in favour of one God and the efficacy of

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sacrifices in general was being doubted and a more spiritual form of worship was being substituted in its place, and the first departure is noted in the story given in the Kena Upanishat.

"Brahman obtained the victory for the Devas. The Devas became elated by the victory of Brahman, and they thought, 'this victory is ours only'. Brahman perceived this and appeared to them. But they did not know it and said, "what yaksha is this?" They said to Agni (fire): O, Jatavedas, find out what sprite this is'. 'Yes' he said. He ran towards it, and Brahman said to him: 'Who are you?" He replied: 'I am Agni I am Jatavedas.' Brahman said: 'What power is in you?' Agni replied: I could burn all what ever there is no earth' Brahman put a straw before him, saying: 'Burn this,' He went towards it with all his might, but he could not burn it Then he returned thence and said, I could not find out what sprite this is' Then they said to Vayu (air): 'O Vayu, find out what sprite', 'Yes,' he said. He ran towards it, and Brahman said to him 'Who are you?' He replied: 'I am Vayu, I am Matarisvan.' Brahman said: 'What power is in you?' Vayu replied: 'I could take up all whatever there is on earth.' Brahman put a straw before him saying: 'Take it up,' He went towards it with all his might, but he could not take it up. Then he returned thence and said. I could not find out what sprite this is.' Then they said to Indra O Bagavan find out what sprite this is'. He went towards it, but it disappeared from before him Then in the same Akas, ether, he came towards a woman, highly adorned. It was Uma, the daughter of Himavat. He said to her. Who is that sprite? She replied: 'It is Brahman It is through the victory of Brahman that he knew that it was Brahman."

This is further step than the position in the Rig Veda where the Ekam Sat or Rudra Pasupati is indentified in a manner with all the Gods. Here, he is not Indra or Varuna, Vayu or Agni He cannot be comprehended of the Gods though. He is before them, and it was left to Uma Haimavati to point out the Supreme Brahman, as her consort. This story is frequently repeated in the Puranas and the person of Rudra-Siva is introduced as Uma's Lord. Studies in Saiva Siddhanta by Late J.N. Nallasamy Pillai.

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Cat. 13. RISHABHAVAHANA DEVAR

(Siva reclining on his bull
the bull was not available among the finds).
Tiruvengadu - Sirkali Tk.
Early Chola - 1011 A. D.

	Siva	Parvati
Ht. Total :	106.5 cm.	94 cm
Without Ped:	96.5 cm	84 cm
Wt.	120Kg.	68-750 Kg.
A.G.Br. NO.	86	87

The images of Siva and his consort Parvati under description, Bhikshatanar (Cat. No. 13), Bhairavar (Entholmukkannar) (Cat. No. 15) and Kalyana sundarar set-4 Idols-Cat. No. 15, were all treasure trove finds found buried in troubled times in Tiruvengadu Village, Sirkali Taluk. They were casually unearthed in the year 1951 and acquired for the Art Gallery Thanjavur in the year 1952.

An inscription on the southern *(garbagraha)* wall of Svetaranyaswami Temple at Tiruvengadu of the 26th year of accession, (corresponding to 1011 A. D.,) of Raja Raja I, refers to the presentation of this bronze image by one Kolakkavan. Just about this time, the great Chola Emperor Raja Raja I, had completed the building of the Brahadeeswarar Temple at Thanjavur. Another inscription2 on the same wall refers to the image of Devi, styled as

Foot Note:- 1) Inscription No.456 of 1918 published by the Archaeological Department
2) do 457 do do

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Umaparameswari, the consort of Rishabhavahana Devar, was made and presented in the next year 1012 A.D., by a guild called Rajaraja Jananatha Therinja Parivaram of the village.

XXVII

This superb representation of Siva is an unique achievement of the early Cholas: you won't find anything like it in any temple or museum of Tamil Nadu! The tresses are arranged as a circular ***jatabhara***, similar in fashion to an ***ushnisha***. The turban, consisting of the hair locks of Siva, is unique and fits in an admirable manner. The hair is arranged in fifteen locks drawn back from the fillet on the forehead. These are divided into two switches of three locks of hair which cross each other and overlap to present from the front the appearance of a turban. At the back ten loose ends of hair locks reappear, eight emerging in a semi-circular shape at the nape of the neck, and the remaining two curling down each shoulder. Since the deity is represented here as a peasant and cow-herd, the sculptor has evidently intended the curls of hair on each shoulder to be a substitute for the usual *bahulamala* of flowers. The usual *chandrakala* (moon) is shown on the right side, realistically inserted inside one of the upper strands of the hair style. A cobra may be seen crawing among the locks of hair on the right peeping out

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but not hissing. The datura flower has been similarly tucked in at the left side.

The face is round with beaming eyes looking down, The third eye is in the middle of the forehead. A well-chiselled nose without any exaggeration, pretty lips and chin enhance by contrast the beauty of the powerful torso below. The right ear is empty. The left ear carries the *patrakundala*, while a beautiful flower rests above the ear on the right. In addition to the hair-locks already described a streamer of three silk strings hangs from his necklaces down the shoulder as a *skandamala*. Three necklaces, one of beads, another of arabesque work and the third a *rudhrakshamala* with tiger's claw dangling below the breast, adorn the neck. A three-stranded *yajnopavita* without branches, with a *brahmabandha* knot and a broad tight *udarabandha* set off the excellent proportions of the torso. An under-cloth, of befitting schematic folds moulded with a central flap and *kaubina* folds at the back, is held in place by a waist belt with a *kiritimukha* clasp between *makaras*.

The deity has been provided with two hands only in keeping with His representation as a peasant. The right hand is positioned to rest on the head of His sacred Bull (Rishabha), while the left hand is in *katyavalampita-hasta*. A *bajibandha* and a bangle with a

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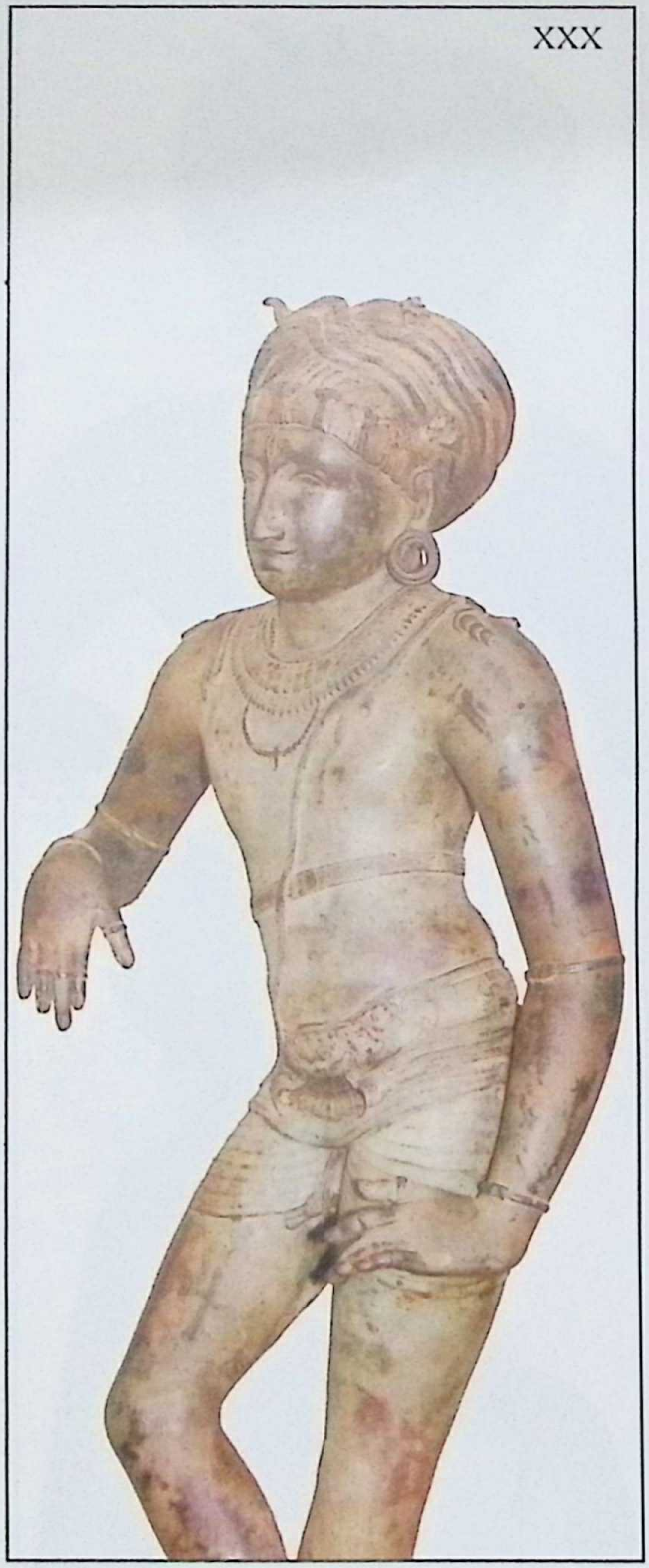

and a bangle with a *muhappu,* mark each arm. The thumb and three fingers of each hand wear rings. Details of the hands, including the nails have been finished with meticulous care. With unrivalled grace and diginity, siva, as a cow-herd, stands firm on his left leg, the right crossed with its toes resting on the ground. *Padasaras,* with a series of small bells attached and rings on all the toes except the middle ones, complete the simple decoration of the otherwise, bare legs.

Completed just one year later in 1012 A.D., the *Devi* is in every way a fit companion for the aesthetic excellence of Her Lord. She stands in *tribhanga*, leaning towards Rishabhavahana - murti with her hands in *kataka* and the left hand hanging like a cow's tail (*govala*). A *karandamukuta* with an elaborate *siraschakra* sits behind the head. Both the ears are empty with long distended lobes. *Bahlamalas* fall down the shoulders with two streamers at right angles, one of beads and jewellery on the right shoulder the other a curl of hair. Between the natural breasts of the becoming and graceful torso, flows a three stranded *yajnopavita* of beads with a *brahmabandha* knot. Three neck-laces, one of beads with tiru another of gold and precious stones and a third of pravala are further decorative features. The hands wear wristlets of *patli pattern* of fourteen courses at the wrists, a *bajibandha* and *angada* of arabesque work on the arms, The under garments of moulded schematic

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folds with its central flap ending in an elegant swallow-tail, is held in place by a makara and kiritimukha clasp. From a second jewelled belt, a long ornamental chain ending in a gem-set pendant, hangs down between the legs of the goddess. Simple padasaras and ring worn on all the toes expect the middle one decorate each foot. Both the God and the Devi stand on separate padmapeedams the latter attached to a separate square plate.

The hair-do of Siva is an unique feature of this image. We are reminded here of the Thevaram hymns wherein Saint Sundaramurthi Nayanar who sings as folows:-

"பிழைக டீரத் தொழு மின்!
பின்னு சடை பிஞ்ஞகன்"

"For Liberation from all acts of ommission and commissions pray thou to the Lord with the twisted hair-locks"

திருக்கழுக்குன்றப் பதிகம் 9 வது செய்யுள்

The twisted hair-locks in this image may also be specially noted (Vide plate No. XXVIII) Such twisted hair-locks are also displayed in Nataraja images.

Note:-

Before the year 1942, the words 'பின்னுசடை' were printed as 'பின்சடை' It was left to Maha-Maho-Ubhadyaya Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Ayyer cto correct the words 'பின்சடை' as 'பின்னுசடை'. This was during his last days at Tirukkazhukundram (Vide page 4 of the Tamil daily Swadeesamitran. dated 8 th May 1942.)

XXXI

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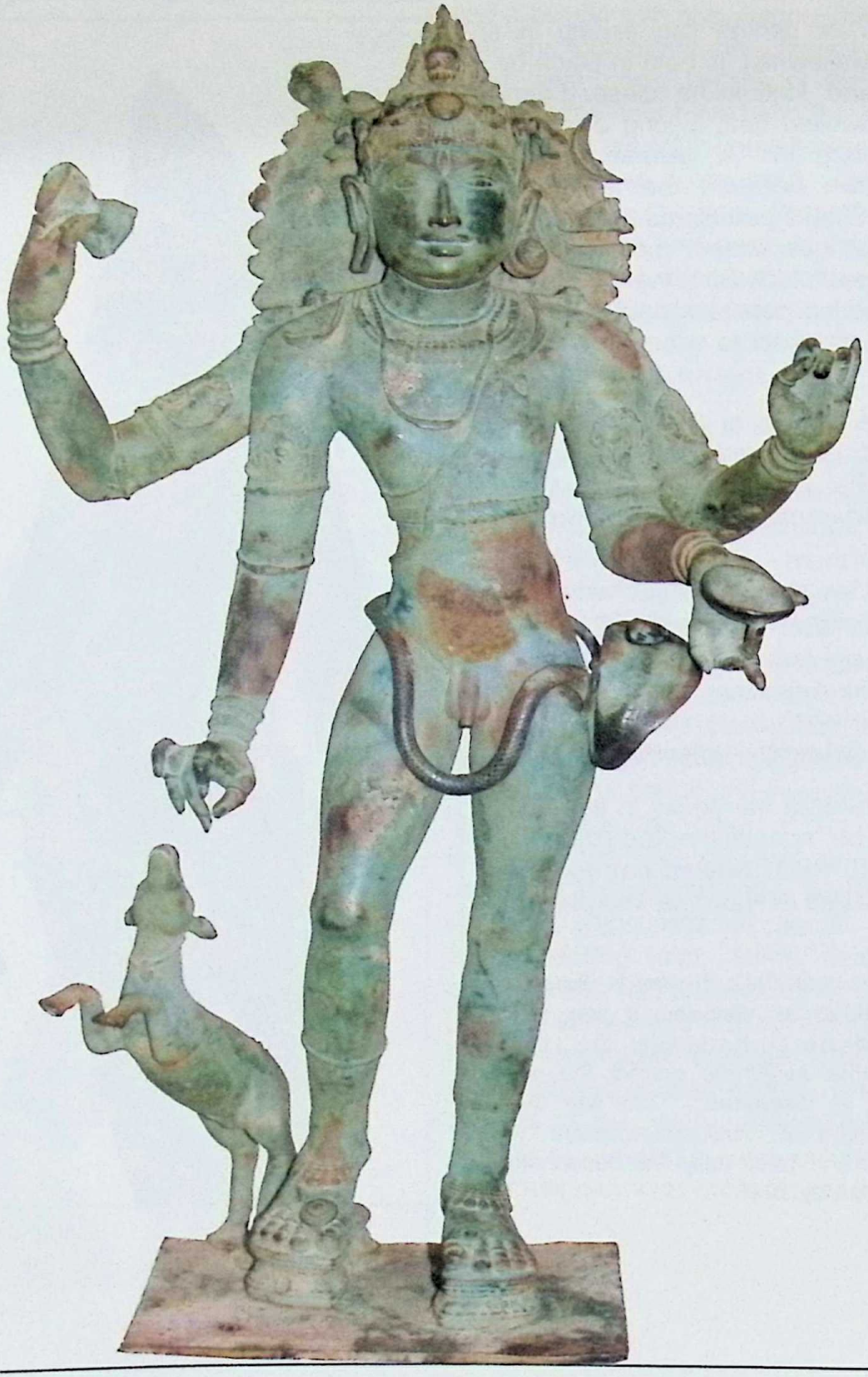
XXXII



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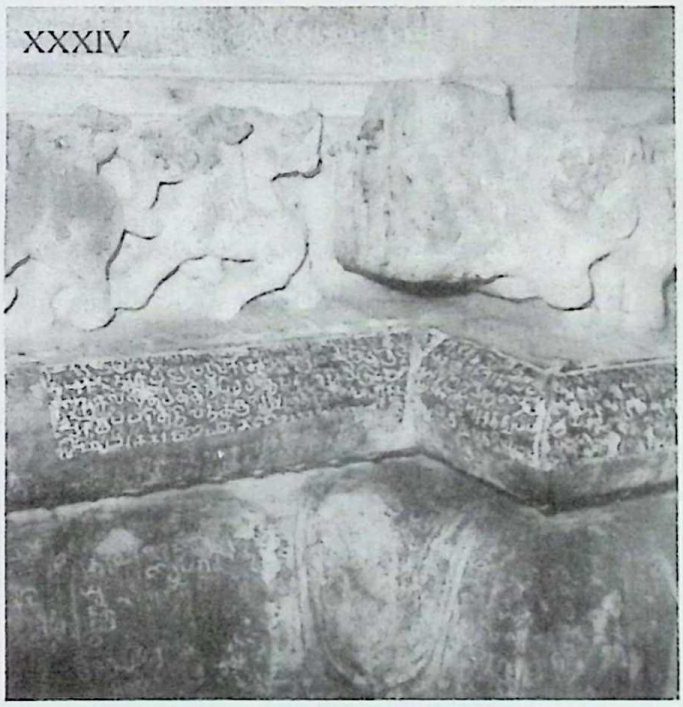
Cat. 14. BHIKSHATANA-SIVA IN THE BEGGAR FORM

Tiruvengadu. Village - Sirkali Tk.
11th Century A.D. (1040 A.D.)
Ht Total: 90 cm.
Wt: 99 Kg.
A. G. Br. No. 92

The image is a treasure trove unearthed in the year 1951 along with the images in Cat.Nos. 13, 15 and 16. This is one of the finest Bhikshatanas in any museum collection.

An inscription1 on the northern end of the western wall of the *garbhagriha* Svetaranyaswami Temple at. Tiruvengadu of the 30th year of accession of Rajadhiraja (corresponding to 1040 A.D.) refers to the presentation of this bronze of Pichai Thevar (Bhikshatana) silver and gold ornaments and dedication of lands for puja to it by one Amalan Cheyyavayar.



Footnote: 1. Inscription No. 450 and 451 of 1918 published in the year 1919 of the Archaeological Department.

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The legend of the Bikhshatana is not in vogue in North India and no image of this idol can therefore be seen there, because it implies a criticism of brahminical practices. It is a prelude to the dance of Nataraja. The incident is narrated in *Skandapuranam Daksha Kanda* and it centres around the forest of Darukavanam where Siva humbled the heretic rishis (sages) who became so proud of their learning, rituals and their materialistic philosophy that they did not realise the presence of God or the might of Siva. The Vedas represented the *"Sabda Brahman"*[2] and the rishis thought that no God was required and the worship of *"Sabda Brahman"* was alone sufficient for securing salvation.[3]

The Rishis had to be humbled and taught lessons. Both Siva and Vishnu walked into their village Siva disguised as a mendicant Bikhsha-Atanawith the begging bowl and Vishnu in the form of *mohini* (lovely lady). All the rishis infatuated by *mohini* deserted their *yagas* and went after Her. The rishis' chaste wives were attracted to Siva and followed Him like the childre in the story of the "Piper of Hamelin". They would not return to their husbands. Thus the Rishis were made to realise that there was Siva greater than themselves. At the heart of this myth is the idea of God pursuing humanity as in THOMSONS "HOUND OF HEAVEN." God chases man asking him to give up his ego to Him. Hindu mythology looks upon God as an Eternal Begger waiting for the opening of the door that He may enter into the darkness and illumine the whole horizon of our being as with a lightning flash. It is not so much man seeking God as God seeking man; He goes into the wilderness to lead us out of it.

This image of Bikhshatana depicts Siva's aspect as a naked begger moving forward on the firmly placed left foot, his right foot behind slightly raised from the *paduka* as he steps forward. The right leg wears a *bringipada* with a single jingling bell and the left is encircled by a jewelled *virakkazal.* A *padasara* rests on each foot; a serpent separately and movably made, and looped around the waist of the mendicant, exposes his nudity by rearing with spread hood on the left flank-beside the thigh. The body of excellent anatomical proportions, is ornamented with three necklaces, one of which is a *rudrakanti* of corals, an *udarabandha,* a three stranded *yajnopavita* with a *brahmabandha* knot, and a single jewelled streamlet on the right shoulder. Two *bahulamalas* of twisted hair bound with flowers hang on either shoulder.

2. **Sabda Brahman** of Vedas-simply means Vedic sacrifices and their sounds.

3. Compare:- "கன்மமே பயன்தரும்: கடவுள் வேண்டா"
"விரதமே பரமாக வேதியரும்"
"சுத்தமாகவே சாத்திரம் காட்டினர் – திருவாசகம்–மாணிக்கவாசகர்.

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The face is round with the lips silghtly parted in smile; the third eye is indicated on the forehead. The distended lobe of the right ear is empty while the left ear wears a *patrakundala* (a woman's ear ornament). The hair is drawn back from a forehead fillet, with an unusual circular *chutti*, to spread out behind the head in a fan-like arrangement with curling ends. On the left, a loop and two ribbons of cloth are the fastenings of the spread of the hair.

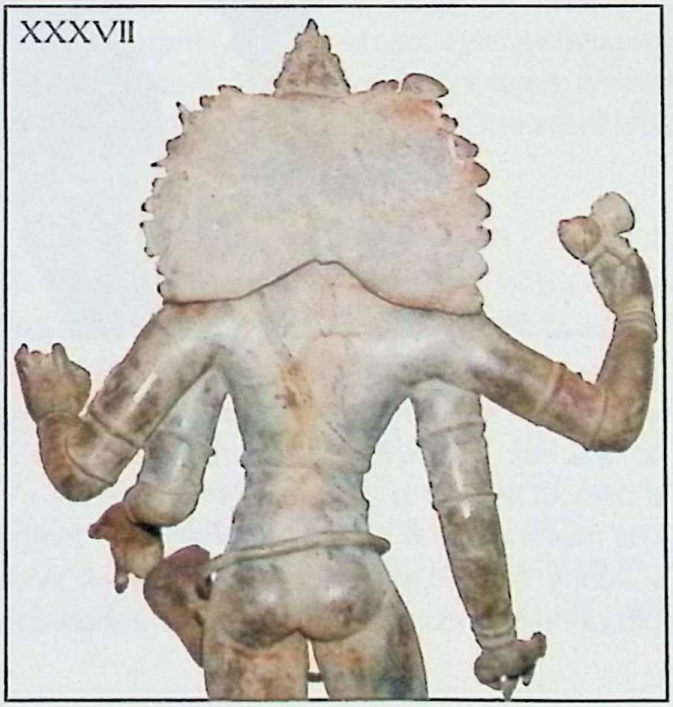
Clearly displayed are the crescent moon, the hissing serpent and the *datura* flower, as bud, flower, and fully open blossom. On top of the head, a jewelled tiara containing the *makara* design is prominently fronted by *ventalai* (a human skull).[4] The eyes of this skull are made of pure silver. Probably the eyes would have been jewelled (now empty). Imagine how sinister and exciting this effect would be in a plain bronze statue! By this something of Siva's majestic destructiveness is hinted at in a statue that portrays His other gentler aspect, that of pity for mankind.

The four arms are each clearly modelled; from the shoulders down, the upper left in kataka-hasta should have held the peacock-feather fan or the bundle of bones usual in images of Bhikshatana or Gangala-Siva. The lower left hand.

Footnote: 4) The human skull is to be seen prominently in Nataraja and Dakshinamurti images. It signifies Siva's destroying energy.

XXXV

XXXVI


XXXVII

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XXXVIII

delicately proffers a *kapala* of human skull, used as a a begging bowl. Finally the right hand is shown in *kataka-hasta*, holding a bunch of grass lowered towards the antelope with leaps up in a vain attempt to reach this food. The animal with a threaded bell round its neck, is shown as an young stag. It has not been provided with horns, which signifies its immaturity. The bleating of the *sabda brahman* (*vide* footnote 2 *supra*) is represented by the deer or the antelope; it could not reach God. Its sleek, lively volume, bouncing by Siva's side, completes this wonderful icon of God who has wandered from the forest to beg for the "ego" of humanity.

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Note also the oval, gem inserted on the plain square base pedestal near Siva's right foot. This represents Siva's tears for mankind. The right hand and right eye are in a line pointing towards it.

XXXIX

The large stone group on the same subject of Siva (not nude but clad) accompanied by His attendants on the left side (ganas) and the rishis' wives on the right exhibited in the court yard may be seen along with this form. A different aspect of Him is suggested in that work. He is the handsome seducer, coming down to humitiate the rishis.

The effect of His presence on the women and its consequent result on their husbands, the sages, is most subtly presented in several psychological stages - Admiration, Dissimulation, Abandonment, Retreat and a Woman's pride and prestige. From the right side (the side the Ganas would see him from), he appears grandly unconcerned. Siva's ambiguity-the ambiguity of the God who works in and through time-has been superbly shown: winning on the side of the ladies to get his way, calm and withdrawn into Himself on the other side, omniscient and omnipotent.

This form of the image of Siva is not to be found or worshipped in North India for the obvious reason that it implicitly criticizes the Vedic sacrifices and Advaita philosophy. But every Saivite temple in Tamil Nadu possesses an image of Bhikshatana in stone or bronze. Thevaram hymns are replete with frequent references to this form of Siva.

Here in one statue we have many of those qualities and symbols that make Chola bronze sculptures great: its restraint, its power to suggest and reconcile conflicting passions, its ability to create majesty and divinity without being grandiose. Especially noteworthy in this statue is its sense of Siva's compassion. Chola civilisation is grand because it understands and represents all of life's aspects harmoniously-the terrible, the gentle and the intimately loving.

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XL

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Cat. 15. BHAIRAVA-SIVA EIGHT ARMED (ENTHOL MUKKAN EMMAN).

Tiruvengadu - Sirkali Tk.
11th Century A. D.

Ht. Total:	109 cm.	
Wt:	111-200 Kg.	without Ped: 90 cm.
A. G. Br. No.	93	

This image of Siva was also a part of the finds at Tiruvengadu Village unearthed in 1952. This is early Chola, 11th Century A.D. Siva stands on a *padmapeedam*, attached to a *bhadrapeedam*, with rings for attachment during processions. The image is the largest Chola depiction of Bhairava in bronze, and among the greatest sculptures of Siva's nude form.

A local legend connected with the temple of Tiruvengadu states that Rishabha, the chief devotee of Siva, was once attacked and wounded by a demon, In terror and agony he prayed to Siva. Siva appeared eight-armed, in a form of fire. Confronted by this terrible apparition, the demon prostrated himself in supplication and the wounds of Rishabha were healed at once. Worship in Tiruvengadu temple still centres around a similar image of Aghora-Murthi - the terrible one.

Endowing multiple hands is a regular feature employed in images to bring home symbolically the powerful aspect of God to the worshippers. The Tamil hymns extol this form of Siva as E*nthol Mukkan Emman*, as "my lord of eight arms and three eyes"!

Saint Tirumoolar the earliest of the canonized Saivaite savants and the author of the *Tirumandiram*, describes the significance of Eight in the following verse:

The only one is He; The second is His Sweet Grace (Sakti);
He stood in the Three; He uttered the four (Dharmas);
He conquered the five (Senses); He spread
Himself out as the Six (Adharas).
He stood transcendent as the seventh, knowing the eighth.[2]

Footnotes:

1) Creation, Preservation and Dissolution.
2) "ஒன்றவன் தானே; இரண்டவன் இன்னருள்;
நின்றனன் மூன்றினுள்; நான்கு உணர்ந்தான்; ஐந்து
வென்றனன்; ஆறுவிரிந்தனன்; எழும்பார்ச்
சென்றனன்; தானிருந்தான் உணர்ந்து எட்டே"

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The Sanskrit poet Kalidasa declares in his *Kumarasambhava*:

> "No selfish want [illegible] prompts a deed of mine;
> Do not the forms eight varied forms-I wear,
> The truth of this to all the world, declare"

Siva stands rigidly, facing us, in *samabanga*. The sculptor has beautifully contrasted the austerity of Siva's stance with the subtle and revealing movement of His arms. The figure is naked except for a girdle of serpents whose hoods are spread on each thigh. Around the arms, serpents with hissing heads *(naga angada)* replace the shapes of contemporary jewelled armlets, while the thick *yajnopavita* itself is formed of the bodies of two writhing serpents. A long garland of round bells hangs from the left shoulder halfway down the right leg. An *udarabandha* of cloth or metal and a small necklace whose pendant falls over the right shoulder as a vertical streamer *(skandamala)* decorate the torso. The feet are ornamented with rings on the outer toes and *padasaras* of small round bells. Flower *bahulamalas* and fastening ribbons from the hair style rest on the shoulders.

"Enthol Mukkannan" is shown as a youth. A flower fillet circles his forehead from which the locks of hair have been combed straight back. They are held in place on the top of the head by twin serpents whose spread hoods flank a jewelled skull. Behind this bizarre diadem, the long hair of the God leaps up in a huge shimmering flame-like triangle supporting the crescent moon, the *datura* blossom, loops and pendants of a jewelled chain. From behind ringlets emerge from underneath in the shape of vertically-standing hair, which is shown without a *siraschakra*. Round, matching *patrakundalas* complete the aspect of the deity. Remaining in three hands can still be seen the *damaru* (a small drum), a bell and a proffered *kapala*. Possibly, the five empty hands once held the sword and shield, the bow and arrow, and the *trisula*. In his treatment of the torso and the round young countenance, the sculptor has carefully visualised this terrific form of Siva as a benign powerful youth - *Vatuka* Bhairava.

What is unique about Chola sculpture and South Indian thought is the emphasis on Siva's benignity, even in aspects where He is terrible, such as the Aryan aspect of Rudra. Notice for instance in this sculpture, the gentleness and amusement in Siva's face and the tenderness of the hands stretching out the begging bowl. There is nothing sentimental in this depiction of Siva's kindness, because the majesty and power of this Godhead are also clear. This radiant balance of strength and sweetness is rare in world art and thought, and could only be achieved by a religious civilisation.

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XLI

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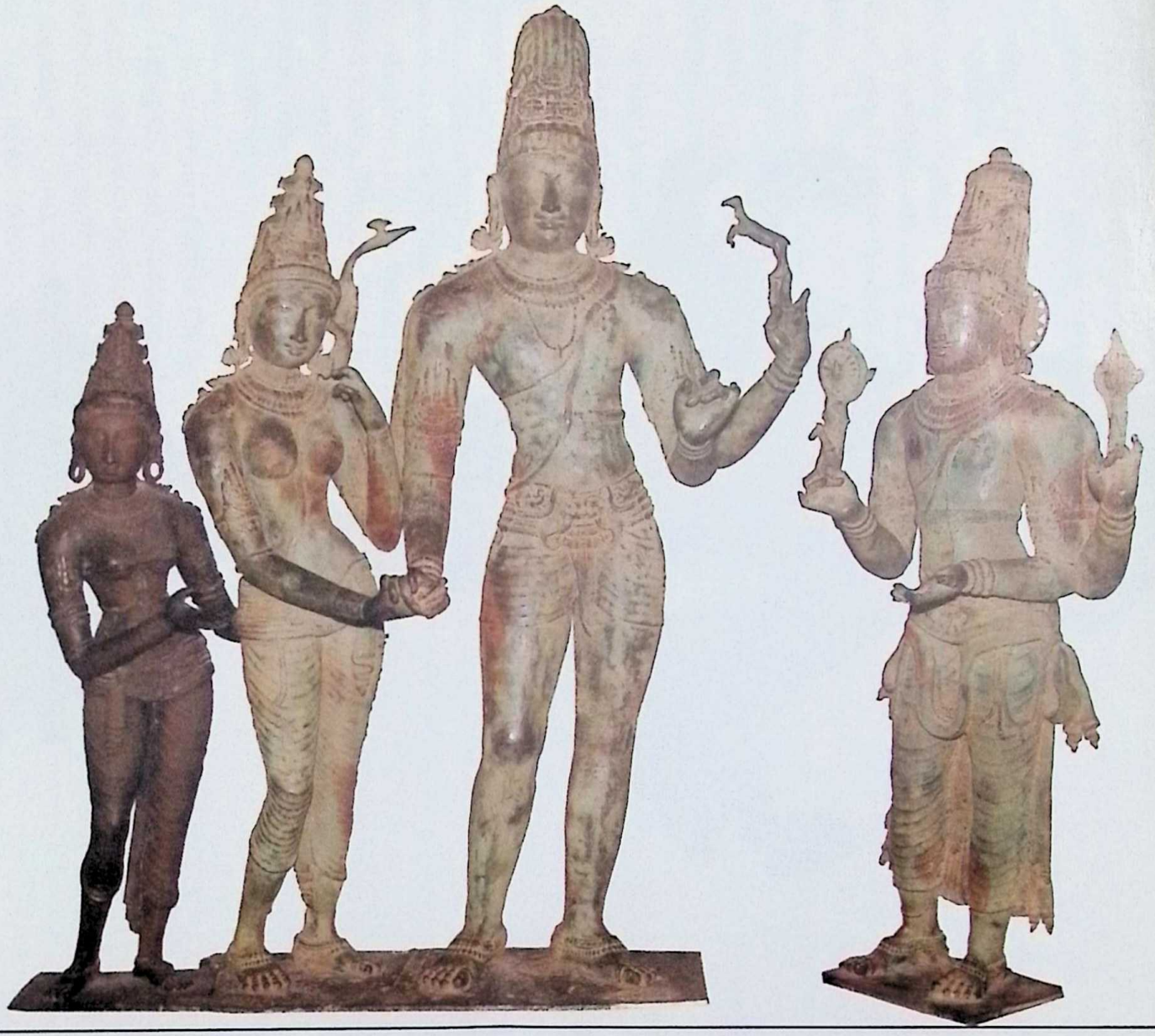

XLII

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Cat. 16. KALYANASUNDARA (SIVA - THE BRIDEGROOM WITH HIS BRIDE)

Tiruvengadu - Sirkali Tk.
11th Century A. D.

	Kalyanasundara (The bride groom)	Parvati (The bride)	Lakshmi (The bridesmaid)	Vishnu (The giver)
Ht. Without Ped	96-5 cm.	81 cm.	63-5 cm.	79 cm.
A. G. Br. No.	89	90	91	88

In this set we have a unique example of a complete group showing Vishnu giving away his sister Parvati in Wedlock to Siva. These were found as a treasure trove find, along with the other forms of Siva described earlier, unearthed in the year 1952 near Svetaranyaswamy Temple in Tiruvengadu. These pieces belong to the early Chola period of the 11th Century A.D.

The marriage of Siva and Parvati is the grand epilogue in the serial of the story of Daksha yaga (Vedic sacrifice) in which the Gods of the Vedic pantheon combined together and plotted to belittle the supremacy of Siva. It was in this legend that one of the five heads of Brahma, the chief officiating priest, was plucked off by Virabadra, the agent of Siva.

The transition from the old polity of the Vedas to the worship of the One Supreme Brahman, Uma's Lord, is therefore emphasised and illustrated in the puranic story of Daksha's sacrifice and thereafter in the final reconciliation of the gods and the celebration of the marriage of Siva and Parvati (Haimavati). Origina'ly Dakshayani, daughter of Daksha, was married to Siva to placate him. But, as Daksha, his father Brahma and other Vedic gods failed in their attempts to subdue Siva, Daksha yaga was specially performed to humiliate Siva by excluding Him from it. Dakshayani, therefore, disappeared in the sacrificial fire. Dakshayani signifies the spirit of sacrifice. And, so long as this spirit of sacrifice was devoted to the One Supreme Brahman, Siva, it was beneficial. But when this Vedic sacrifice, with Brahma officiating as the chief priest and other gods taking part in it, was divorced from the worship of the One Supreme Brahman represented in the person of Siva (as Daksha, Brahma and other gods tried to do by excluding Siva from it), this sacrifice was of no avail. When the spirit of sacrifice was thus divorced from the world, Dakshayani died. She was reborn as Uma-Hairnavati-the bearer of brahma-gnana, and was reunited to Siva. This re-union, or re-birth is what is celebrated in every temple in the festival of "Tirukkalyanam," the holy marriage of Siva.

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Together, the entire group consisting of the images of Siva, Parvati Lakshmi and Vishnu, is known as Kalyana-sundaramurti. Unfortunately, the figure of Lakshmi (A.G Br. No. 91) was cleaned on discovery. It has therefore lost the fine green patina of the rest of the group. Siva and Parvati, the groom and the bride, stand on one base. The lower combined *bhadrapeedam* for Siva, Parvati and Lakshmi which would have been provided for this set, and a separate one for Vishnu, are now missing. They were not available in the treasure finds.

The married couple hold each other's right hands, and are further joined at two other points behind, hidden from view. Altogether, the four points where the two separately cast figures of Siva and Parvati have been welded together are:

i. A point below the right elbow of Siva and the left forearm of Parvati,

ii. Between upper right forearm of Siva and left shoulder of Parvati,

iii. The base plate, and

iv. The united hands of the couple, which must have been separately moulded and cast, and then afterwards welded into their position.

So subtly have these joints been conceived and effected, that they are almost invisible from the front. Similarly, the figure of Lakshmi has a distinct grove in its base-plate for insertion into the base-plate of Siva and Parvati to keep it in its proper position as intended by the sculptor.

The figures of the set are shown in proportions to one another that are strictly governed by their status. So, in this Siva group, Siva dominates and Patvati, though a woman, slightly tops Vishnu. Smallest of the four but in to way less lovely, is the figure of Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu. This complete set of Siva and Parvati with Vishnu and Lakshmi is not found in other collections except in temples. The subject is the happy ceremony of the wedding of Siva. The sculptor exactly captures the spirit of the occasion. Vishnu is sombre, after giving His sister in marriage to Siva. The gift is symbolised by the pouring of water over the joined palms of the bride and the groom, and is known as *kanyadana*. The traditional South Indian version, in which Vishnu as Parvati's brother giving the bride away, may be compared with the representations found in North India (as at Elephanta), Where the bride is given in marriage by Himavan, the Lord of mountains, and his wife Mena.

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Other interesting early Chola Kalyanasundara bronze images may be seen in the Adipuriswara temple, Tiruvotriyur, and in the temples at Tiruvelvikkudi and Vadakkalathur.

Taking in his own right hand the right hand of the bashful Parvati, Siva, the Sundarar (the 'beautiful one'), advances to the left with the swaggering gait of a bridegroom and all the grace of a God. Parvati, overcome by shyness and modesty has to be encouraged by Lakshmi to grasp Siva's hand. At the side, Lakshmi urges the bride forward, with gestures full of tenderness and affection. Vishnu stands apart from the main group on his own flat base. As the brother of the bride he has just poured the ceremonial libation that completes the marriage, his hands in position to hold the ritual water pot. The entire movement of all the lower hands of the group and their design centres over the clasped hands of Siva and Parvati. In the full clasp of Siva and the squeezed-out fingers of Parvati, the gentle but virile strength of the groom and the tenderness of the bride are subtly represented. The meaning and symbolism of taking a wife by *panigraha* have been brilliantly and sensitively shown. From this sacred moment on wards, Parvati will be one with Siva.

Parvati and Lakshmi stand exactly alike, but note the difference which the sculptor has brought out between them. Parvati is shrinking, overcome by shyness at her Lord's firm grasp for the first time. A high *karandamakuta* with three *makara chudamanis* on the sides and front recalling Pallava decorations, *makara-kundalas* in the ears, three necklaces and a string of *tali* around the neck, a three-stranded *yajnopavita, bajibandha*, jewelled *angadas* and bracelets of *patli* variety undergarment with schematic folds pleated at the left thigh and between the legs, held in position by a plain unlooped sash and waist belt of *makara*-clasp with a single-jewelled chain at the right, *padasaras*, and rings of metallic jewellery finish for the fingers and toes, are the decorative features.

SUNDARAR, the bridegroom (Plate XLIII) fulfills all the requirements of aesthetic appreciation (*rasikala*). He stands in abhanga, bent slightly. A high *jatamakuta* crowns the head with some of the *jatas* falling down below *siraschakra*. Superbly sculptured *makarakundalas* fir in the ears. *Bahulamalas* run down each shoulder, with an additional chain-streamlet prominent on the right. Three necklaces including a *rudrakshamala* with tiger-claw pendant, a *yajnopavita* of two main strands (one broad with a *brahmabandha* knot), and an ornamental *udarabandha* adorn the torso. Three bangles for each wrist, *bajibandha* and *angada* with design of jewelled *makaras* decorate the arms. A small undergarment with schematic folds covers the loins and is fastened by a waist belt, displaying

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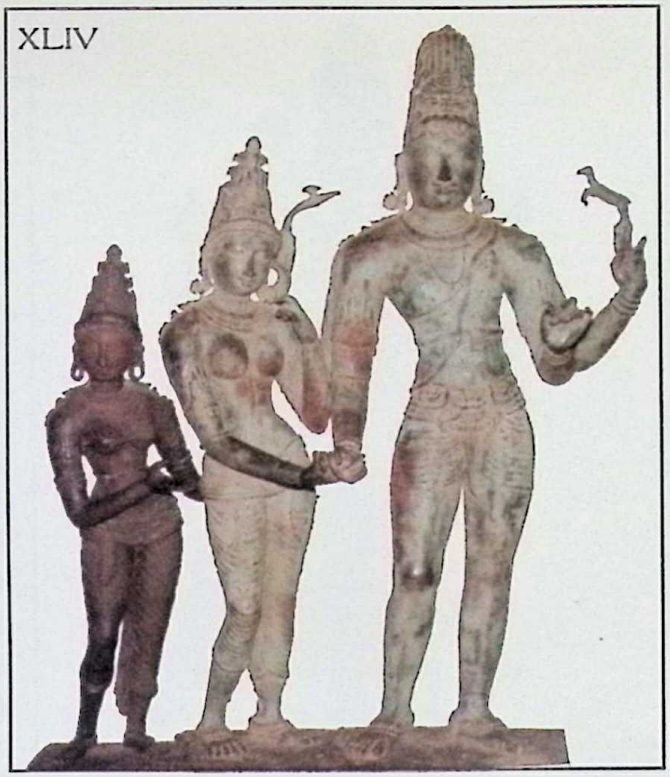
a *kiritimukha* with flanking *makaras*. Folds of the loincloth hang from the waist belt between the thighs, add grace to the figures. Broad *padasaras* set with gems on the feet and toe rings complete the decorative features of this enchanting portrayal of Siva, the bridegroom.

Siva's beaming face is clearly marked with the third eye. The fillet is magnificient and typical of early Chola sculpture. The chainstreamlet on his right shoulder, which is actually the decorated cord of the necklace, is repeated on the shoulders of Parvati, Lakshmi and Vishnu.

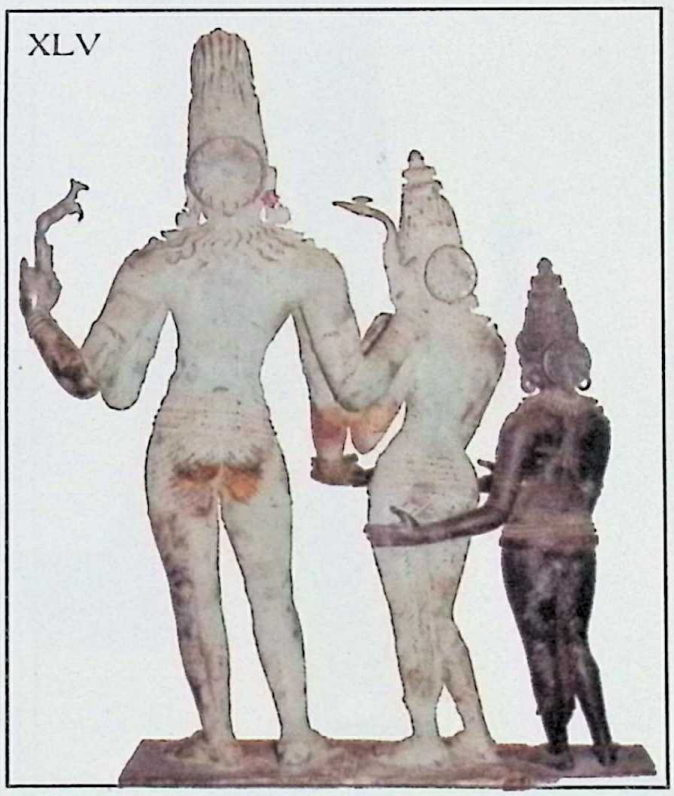
The forms of Vishnu and Siva have been endowed with all the usual distinquishing marks. Siva stands four armed, carrying the antelope and the axe in the back hands. The arms are separately modelled almost from the shoulder itself, giving the dual impression of the human and the divine. The front left hand is in kataka to take a flower, while the right hand grasps the hand of Parvati.

VISHNU (vide plates XLVI and XLVII) has the full complement of dress, drapery, decoration and jewellery. Standing slightly bent in *abhanga*, he wears above his handsome face a high *kiritamakuta* with *siraschakra*. Clearly depicted are the *makarakundalas* of becoming size,

XLIV



XLV



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XLVI

XLVII

bahulamalas on the shoulders, three necklaces of gold and gems, a three-stranded *yajnopavita,* from which a smaller thread passes through the under garment and extends to the right ankle, an *udarabandha* of fine jewellery work, hanging pearl pendants in front, a long undergarment *(pitambaram)* of elaborate drapery with details of schematic folds, side tassels with swallow-tail ends, a wide medium loop and waist belt with the *yalimukha* clasp, *bajibandha* and *angadas* of chased and filigree jewels on the arms, three bangles on each hand and *padasaras* on the feet complete the decorative feature of this facinating God. On the right breast of the deity, a triangular Lakshmi (Srivatsa) mark of gem stone set round with inlaid gold is shown. At the left breast the *yajnopavita* displays the elaborate knot of *brahma-bandha.* Care has been taken to work out details even at the back. Flowing locks of hair of the God at the back side are especially beautiful.

Vishnu is fully identified by His usual characteristics. In the pair of upper arms can be seen *chakra* and conch (*sankha*) with projecting flames. The two remaining hands are suggestive of holding the ceremonial water vessel by the giver. The extra pair of hands of both Vishnu and Siva serve no purpose in the marriage scene. The sculptor could have very well dispensed with them, if his purpose were just to delineate any marriage scene. Not so! His intention was to depict by means of loftiest

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sculptural language and expression the epic glory of the marriage of Parvati, the sister of Vishnu, with no less a person than the Almighty Siva. To this end, the divine participants of the group are given their identification marks in full and also the required extra arms.

LAKSHMI stands in a sympathetic *abhanga*, her face deliberately turned away from the married couple as if she does not want to intrude. A high *karandamakuta,* thin *patrakundalas* in her ears, *siraschakra* behind, flower streamers on the nape of the neck, three necklaces the last with a *channavira* attached at the middle, a *kuchabandha, angada* of a coiled variety, *bajibandha,* heavy *patlis* on the wrists, undergarment of schematic folds with a long median fold and pleat on the right thigh, waist girdle with a clasp of *makaras* back to back, *padasaras* and finger rings are her decorative features. The forehead is circled by a fillet of flowers and crowned by a *karandamakuta* with a large *makara-chudamani* in front, reminiscent of Pallava tiaras.

In keeping with the naturalistic depiction of the scene, the symbols the antelope, the axe, the wheel and the conch-have been sculptured with utmost realism. No trace of conventionality has been allowed to impede the sculptor's imagination and skill. This set is perhaps the most dramatic masterpiece of the Tiruvengadu school of sculpture. The subtlety of its depiction of all the emotions of marriage, its

XLVIII

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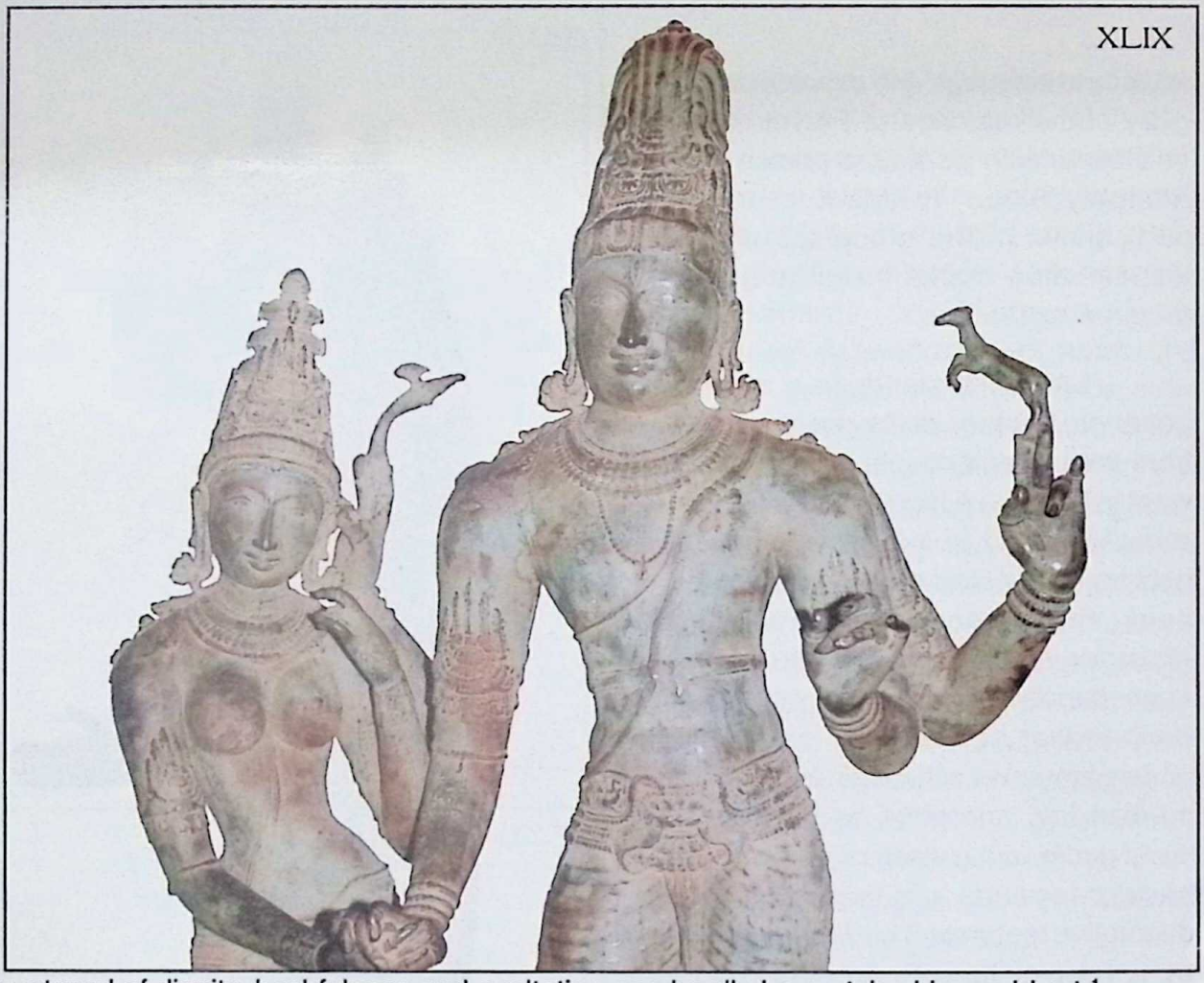


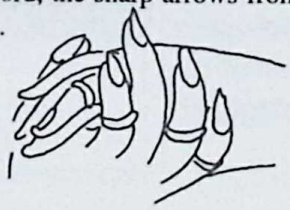
portrayal of dignity, bashfulness and exaltation can hardly be matched in world art.[1]

We have considered the purely lyrical beauty of the Rishabavahana Devar the cowherd, the philosophical depth of the Bhikshatana the drama of the Bhairava and the imaginative range of the marriage between Siva and Parvati of the art school of Tiruvengadu. Now we must look at the Chandrasekara from the same school of a somewhat earlier period.

Footnote: 1) Kambar's picture of the wedding of Sita may be secalled here:

"நோக்கிய நோக்கெனும் நுதிகொள் வேலினை,
வீக்கிய மதுகையான் தோளில் ஆழ்ந்தன"

Looking lovingly at her Lord, the sharp arrows from the forehead of the bride pierced the strong shoulders of the bridegroom.



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CHAPTER V

CHANDRASEKARA.

The name Chandrasekara literally means Wearer of the Moon. Though the inclusion of the rising moon on the crown of Siva, is an essential feature of any Siva image, the simple images of Siva in a straight pose *(samabhanga)* with the hands in a pose of *abhaya* and *varada* have alone been specially called Chandrasekaramurthi. Siva in this form is a popular image which is to be found in all Siva temples.

2. The rising moon has been of great fascination from primitive times. Accordingly great importance has been attached to the rising moon, associated with the primary god Siva and given a honoured place on the crown of Siva. Early Tamil literature[1] and later bakthi hymns of *Thevaram* and *Tiruvachagam* contain often references to the rising moon on Siva's crown. The legend behind the depiction of the moon on Siva's crown is that the moon god, who got into trouble with other gods, was persecuted by them after the "Churning of the Ocean of Milk" Helpless, the moon god found asylum in the person of Siva, who as a gesture of kindness wore him prominently on his crown. All the gods had therefore to bow before him in this advantageous position on the crown of Siva. Wearing of the moon is therefore symbolic of protection and acceptance of asylum[2] to the downtrodden by the grace of God.

3. The existence of the moon the snake and the Ganga together on the crown of Siva has been the subject of poetic imagination of devotees, like Manickavasagar and others, as emphasising Siva's grace in reconciling the above antogonistic[3] elements.

Note:

1. பிறைநுதல் வண்ணம் ஆகின்று அப்பிறை
பதினெண் கண்ணும் ஏத்தவும் படுமே. – புறநானூறு

2. நெற்றியில் கண்ணுடை நிமலத் தெம்பிரான்
உற்றவர்க் கருள் புரிகின்ற உண்மையைத்
தெற்றென உணர்த்தல்போல் திங்களின் கலை
கற்றையஞ் சடைமிசைக் கவின்று பூத்ததே – கந்தபுராணம்

3. கதியடி யேற்குள் கழல்தந்தருளவும் ஊண்கழியா
விதியடி யேனை விடுதிகண்டாய் வென்தலை முழையிற்
பதியுடை வாளரப் பார்த்திறை பைத்துச் சுருங்க அஞ்சி
மதிநெடு நீரிற்குளித் தொளிக்குஞ்சடை மன்னவனே!
– மாணிக்கவாசகர் நீத்தல் விண்ணப்பம்

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Cat. 17. CHANDRASEKARA (SIVA) & PARVATI.

Tiruvengadu - Sirkali Tk.
10th Century A.D.

	Siva	Parvati
Ht. Total :	51 cm.	41 cm.
without Ped :	39 cm.	30 cm.
Wt :	9 Kg.	5 Kg.
A. G. Br. No.	171	172

LI

These two images were also treasure trove finds from Tiruvengadu village, recovered during the year 1967, along with other pieces from the same source. Siva is standing in *samabhanga* on a *padmapeedam* attached to a high *bhadrapeedam* with mortises at the sides for prabha and holes in the front and back for processional securing. The Siva has four hands, upper right with axe, upper left with an antelope facing God, lower right showing *abhaya* and the lower left *katyavalampita*. He wears a high *jatamakuta* with crescent moon on his left and datura flowers and serpent above on the right. The hair hangs behind in eighteen ringlets on the nape of the neck, and above it is a lotus *siraschakra* Both the ears are empty with distended lobes. The extremely attractive face is shown with a thrid eye on the forehead.

The excellent torso shows a single necklace with tiger claw pendant, a two stranded *yajnopavita* of cotton thread and pearls and a broad *udarabandha* The arms

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are decorated with *bajibandha* and a single wristlet. The under-garment is an *ardhoraka* of stripes with a *kiritimukha* clasp and a wide median loop. From the *kiritimukha* clasp with *makara* design at the ends, a narrow chain of beads or gems issues across the girdle at either flank. The loose ends of the belts and sashes may be seen hanging down between the thighs. These features of costume may also be seen on the group of Subrahmanya Cat. No. 4 and Sundaramurti, Cat. No. 102 from the same place. *Padasaras* are seen on the feet.

Parvati of this set is especially beautiful and should be noted. She stands in *abhanga* on a similar *padmapeedam* attached to a *bhadrapeedam* provided with arrangement for carrying and attachment of the *prabha*. Her right hand is in *kataka* and left hand in *govala*. *Tiru* round her neck, a pearl necklace of single strand and *yajnopavita* of single strand, passing through the beautifully shaped breasts are the simple jewellery of this elegant image of the Goddess. Ear lobes are distended; no *kundalas* are present. High *jatamakuta* with heavily encrusted tiara, *siraschakra* behind and fiteen ringlets of hair on the nape behind are the decorative features of the head dress. Armlets and bracelets are similar to her consort Siva. Close fitting undergarment in wavy lines is encircled by a waist girdle with a narrow jewelled clasp. The pleat of the sari is indicated on the right side. *Padasaras* are worn on the legs. No mere description could convey the delicacy of this figure; it must be savoured in its richness.

Well-finished and of excellent anatomical proportions, both the images of Siva and Parvati may be dated in the early Chola period. Though these images are small, their ornamentation is delicate; but even on this scale that grandeur which characterises all earlier Chola sculpture is apparent. What but the greatest and subtlist art could achieve this?

Cat. 18. CHANDRASEKARA (SIVA) AND CONSORT PARVATI.

Tiruppurambium - Kumbakonam Tk.
10th Century A.D.

	Siva	Parvati
Ht. Total:	81 cm.	51 cm.
Without Ped:	66 cm.	41 cm.
Wt:	27.600 Kg.	11.600 Kg.
A. G. Br. No.	34	35

The image is similar to Chandrasekara described by Barret, from Sayavanam near Kaveripoompattinam.

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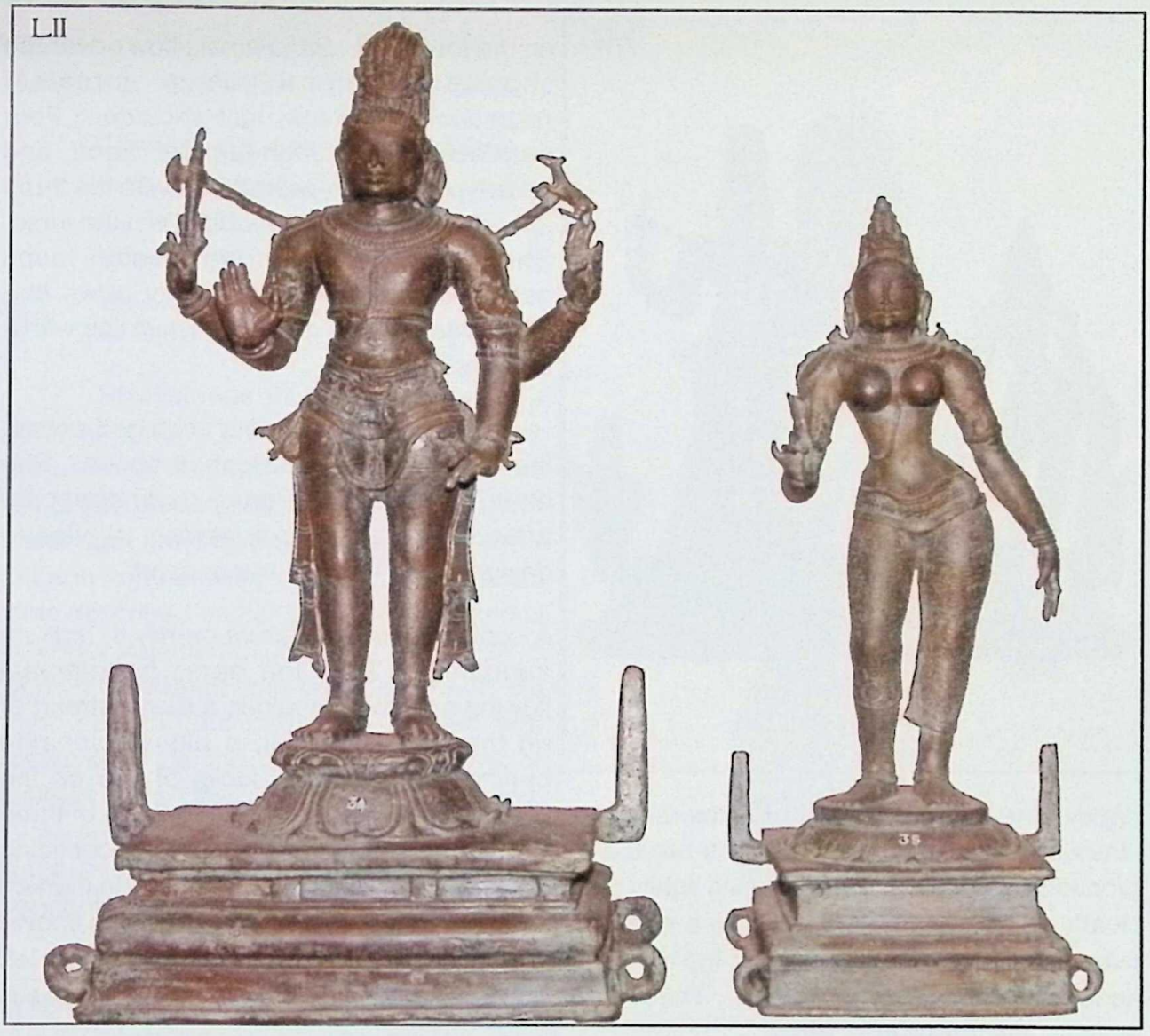
LII



The image has all the hallmarks of early Chola work. The deity stands on a *padmapeedam* attached to a *bhadrapeedam*, provided with high tenons for attachment of prabha, and four fixed rings for transport. He has four hands, the upper with the axe and antelope. It may be noticed that the channels through which the mother metal once flowed to the deer and the axe during the process of casting had not been removed. It has been left to provide additional support. Please see similar device adopted in the image in Cat. No. 26. Pl-LX. The lower right is in *abhaya*. The lower left is in *katyavalampita*. A high *jatamakuta* with *chandrakala* in it, besides serpent, datura, *makara - chudamani*, locks of hair in ringlets on the back of the nape, and a big *siraschakra* are the decorative features of the crown. *Patrakundala* is present in the left ear, while the right ear lobe is empty. Third eye is marked

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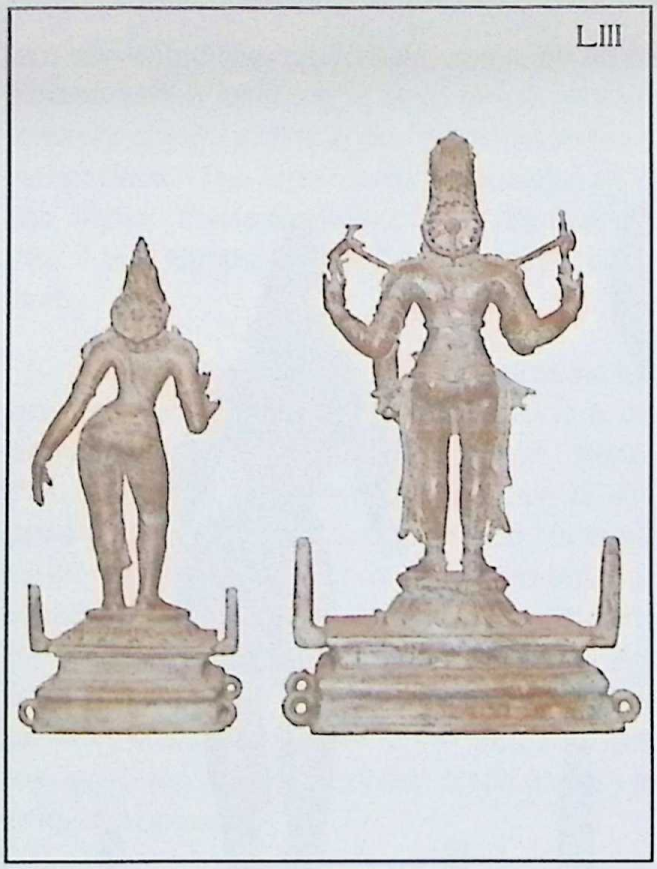

on the forehead. *Bahulamala* flows over the shoulders with a single streamer *(skandamala)* on the right shoulder. Four necklaces of the *mangamalai, kanti,* and *karai* types, a wide *yajnopavita* with the three strands a high *udarabandha* adorn the torso. Shorts and sash with big median loops gathered at the sides in heavy bows and swallowtail fringes cover the waist line with a pleat behind.

The goddess forms a set together with the Chandrasekara described above. She stands in *tribhanga* on a *padmapeedam* attached to a *bhadrapeedam* similar in design to the base of her consort.

A conical *Karandamakuta* on head, *makara kundalas* in both the ears, *bahulamala* flowing on either shoulder, a single streamer on the right shoulder, a big *siraschakra* behind, six ringlets of locks of hair on the nape of the neck, two necklaces, the *tali-tiru* string around the neck and *yajnopavita* of three strands without bifurcating threads are the decorative features of the torso. A closefitting brocaded undergarment is wrapped tightly round each leg separately with floral design marked clearly on the cloth. This is held by a waist-girdle of beads and corals, with the pleats shown over the waist at the back and at the right side. A lily is held in the right hand, while the left hand is hanging down in *govala.* The *angada* is jewelled and a group of three bangles is worn on the wrists.

An effect of alertness and dignity is captured by the slight backward tilt of the figure. A round face, young bosoms, and forthright stance make this vigorous representation of Parvati a perfectly matched companion of Siva of this set.

The single streamer on the right shoulder and one thick set of yajnopavita threads without bifurcating strands, and the general build of the image would warrant a date for this specimen of around 1000 A.D. With their solid proportions and terse vitality, these figures of Siva and Parvati take a special place among the productions of the early Chola Schools.

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Cat. 19. CHANDRASEKARA-SIVA

ThanjavurDt.-Locality not known
12th Century A. D.
Ht. Total:76 cm.
Without Ped : 69 cm.
Wt: 31.875 Kg.
A. G. Br. No. 101

Siva stands in *samabhanga* on a *padmapeedam*. The axe held in the upper right arm is broken. The antelope in the upper left, is springing towards the god. The lower right hand is in *abhaya* and the lower left is in *varada*, while in the Chandrasekara idols described earlier the lower left hand is in *katya valampita*. A high *jatamakuta* is worn on the head with *chandrakala* on the right, serpent and *datura* on the left, with *siraschakra* behind and eleven ringlets of locks of hair on the nape of the neck behind. Close fitting shorts are worn with *kiriti-mukha* clasp and median loop, with a U shaped pendant. *Kachcha* pleat is seen behind.

Stylistically, the decorative features of Chandrasekara can be grouped more with late Chola than with early Chola. The single rosary is dangling beyond the breasts. The presence of streamers on both shoulders are marks of later Chola. On grounds of style, the image may be assigned to 12th Century A.D.

LIV

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Cat. 20. CHANDRASEKARA-SIVA

Thanjavur Dt.-Locality not known
17th-18th Century A.D.
Ht. 38 cm.

A. G. Br. No. 103

The image has all the usual iconographic details of Chandrasekara Siva, but the workmanship which exhibits attention to every detail lacks such refinement as would be possible by chasing the metal. Stylistically, it is a poor copy of early Chola models - the work of less skilled hands.

Cat. 21. CHANDRASEKARA-SIVA

Kilayur-Nagappattinam Tk.
17th-18th Century A. D.
Ht. Total: 53 cm.
without Ped: 41 cm.
Wt: 11.700 Kg.
A. G. Br. No. 44

This is a modern specimen with the full complement of Chandrasekara. The requirements of iconography and iconometry have been complied with in a purely conventional manner.

The right leg has the additional *bringipada* which is unusual and significantly points to the ascription of the image to a modern date.

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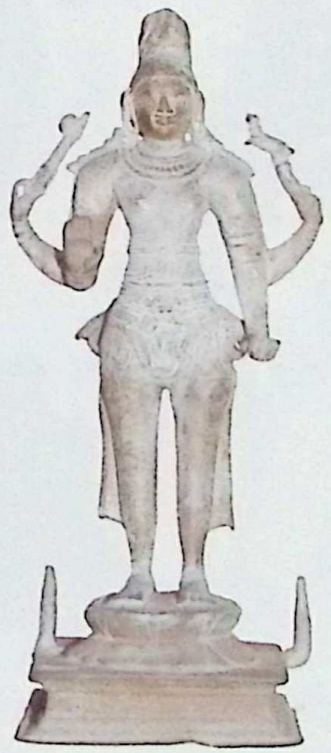
Cat. 22. CHANDRASEKARA-SIVA

Thanjavur Dt.-Locality not known
17th-18th Century A.D.
Ht. Total: 38 cm.
Without Ped. 34 cm.
A.G. Br. No. 205

The image is a late specimen with the full complement of Chandrasekara requirement of iconography. The God stands in *samabahanga* on a *padma-peedam* over a *bhadrapeedam*, provided with tenons for inserting the *prabhavali* but without holes for carrying in processions. The God has a beaming face with the central eye marked. The right ear carries a *makarakundala,* the left *patra-kundala.*

LVIII



Cat. 23. CHANDRASEKARA-SIVA

Thanjavur Dt.-Locality not known
18th-19th Century A.D.
Ht. Total: 37 cm.
without Ped: 34 cm.
Wt:
A.G. Br. No. 206.

This is a modern specimen, with the full complement of Chandrasekara. The image has *makarakundala* on both the ears. The metal is of poor quality.

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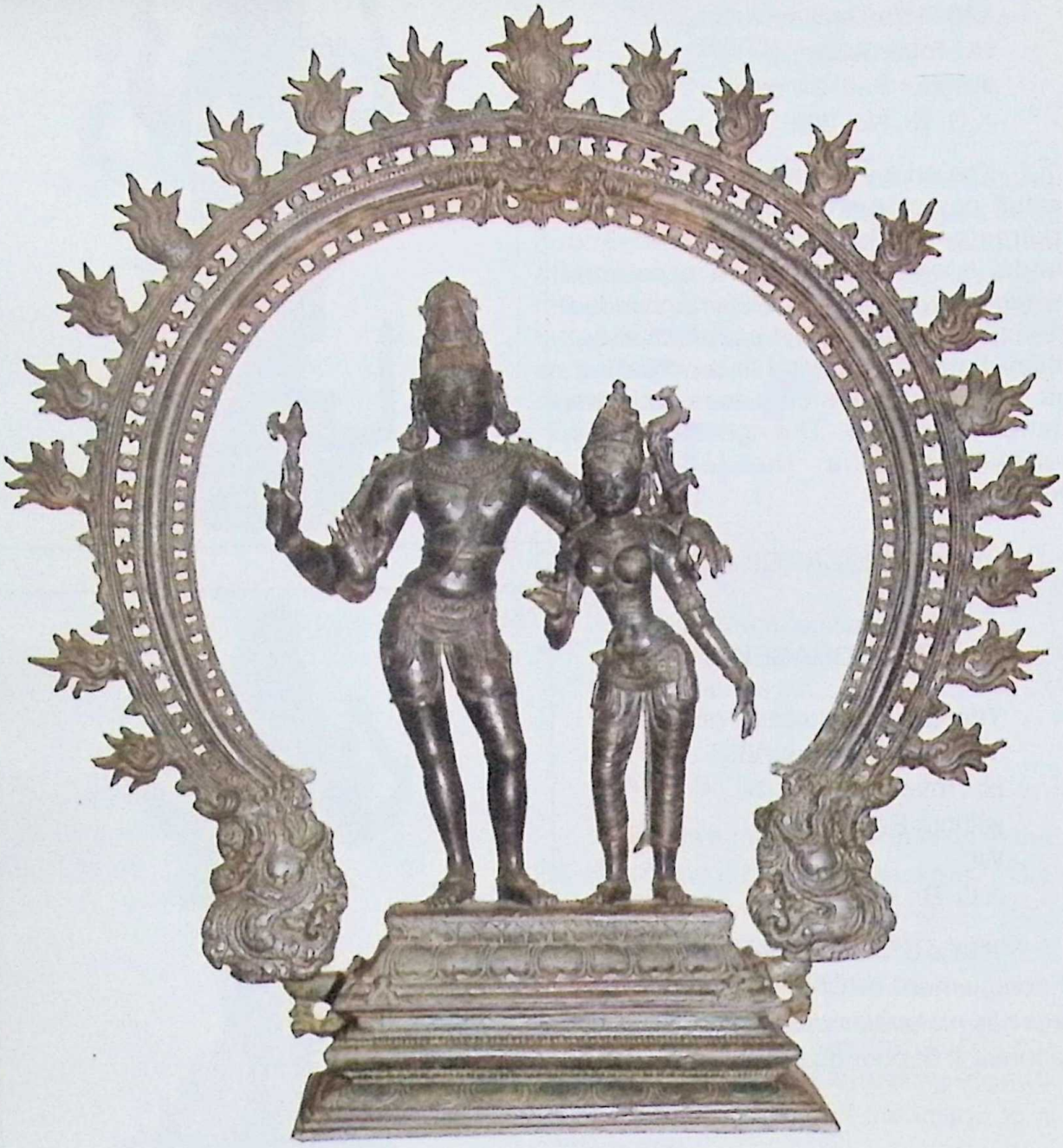
LIX



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Cat. 24. ALINGANA CHANDRASEKARA-PRODOSHAMURTI

Kadalangudi - Nannilam Tk.
12th-13th Century A.D.

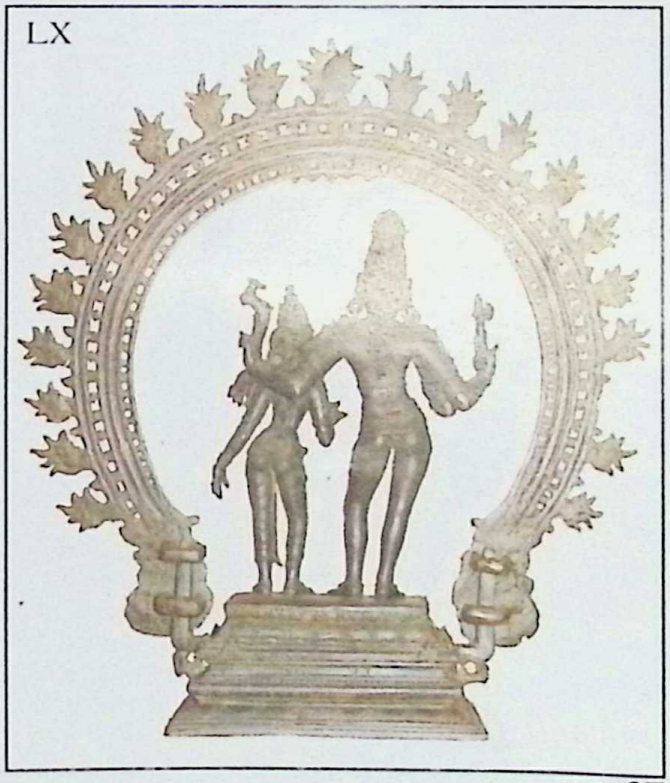
Ht. Total:	51 cm.	without Ped: 28 cm.
Wt:	10.00 Kg.	A. G. Br. No. 125

These two images Siva and Parvati on one peedam are treasure trove finds unearthed during the year 1967.

The combined images of Chandrasekara Siva together with His consort on one *peedam* are known as Prodoshamurti. They are intended to be taken in procession within the four walls of the temple on *Prodosha* occasions between 5 P.M. and 6 P.M., which is observed twice a month on the 13th-14th day after each newmoon and fullmoon. Siva is supposed to be dancing in heaven on these evenings. As the processions on these days are confined to the precincts of the temples the images are designed in small sizes for easy management.

Siva stands in *abhanga*, embracing Parvati with His lower left arm thrown over her shoulders, while the Goddess is nestling against His fondling hand. The lower right is in abhaya. Both stand on rectangular double *padmapeedam* attached to a *bhadrapeedam* with an ornate *makara-tiruvachi* of twenty one tongues of flame with a *kiritimukha* central design. A high *jatamakuta* with serpent on the right, crescent moon on the left and a conventionalised *siraschakra* adorn the head region. Hair is shown in ringlets on the nape of the neck behind. *Makarakundala* hangs in the right ear and *patrakundala* in the left ear. Elaborate *bahulamala* flow down the shoulders. *Tudis* are seen on both shoulders as *skandamala*. Three necklaces, a three-standed *yajnopavita* with an additional

LX



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smaller bead strand branching off in front of it, *udarabandha*, armlets, wristlets, *ardhoraka* (shorts) with *kiritimukha* waist - girdle, an oval median loop and padasaras, are some of the other usual decorative features. The first two fingers of the upper left hand balance the antelope with its face turned back towards the God, while the right upper arm holds the axe. The God is alert and majestic at the same time. His lower right hand assures *abhaya* to the devotee.

The devi stands on his left in abhanga inclined towards him, with the right hand in position to hold the lotus and the left hand hanging loose in *govala*. Her torso is perfect, *karandamakuta* with a conventionalised *siraschakra, makarakundalas* in the ears, *bahulamalas* with streamer at right angles to it on the shoulders, four necklaces, a thick-stranded *yajnopavita, keyuras bajibandha* and wristlets on the arms, an elaborate and close fitting undergarment in schemetic folds with an elongated central flap, waist girdles and padasaras are her decorative features.

Stylistically the group is a late Chola specimen with graceful flexions

Cat. 25. ALINGANA CHANDRASEKARA-PRODOSHAMURTI

Thanikkottam Village - Tiruturaipoondi Tk.
15th-16th Century A.D.
Ht. Total: 38 cm.
without Ped: 29 cm.
Wt: 8.500 Kg.
A.G. Br. No. 235

These two images, Siva and Parvati, were treasure trove finds unearthed in a channel in the village in the year 1973. The pair stand on a single oval padmapeedam which is fixed to a rectangular bhadrapeedam. The latter has been provided with long tenons at the sides for fixing a prabhavali, which was not available in the collections. The lower peedam has also been provided with holes for attachment during processions inside the temple, as these images are primarily intended to be taken in procession on prodosha occasions. The images are in the same iconographic form already described in the preceeding Cat No. 24, except that in the image under description the embracing lower hand of Siva is placed below the hip of Parvati. It may be noticed that the hand of the image of Siva previously described in Cat. No.24 is placed over the shoulder of His consort. The effect of such an embrace is that the two figures are brought nearer together.

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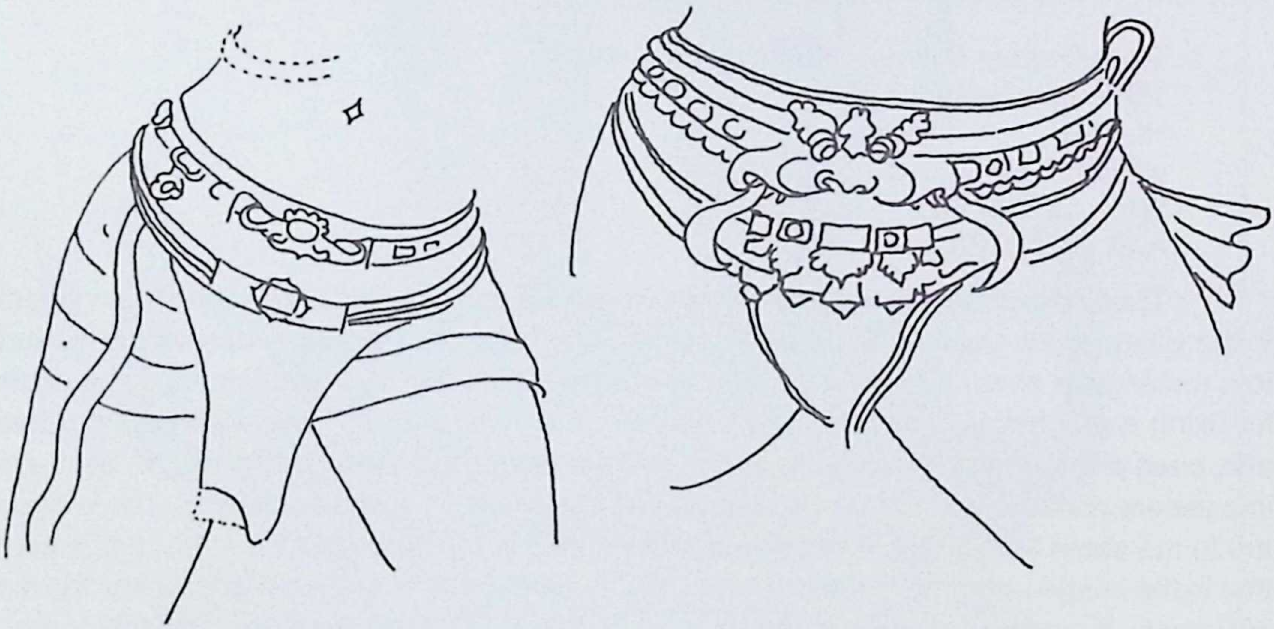
Siva has the usual four hands, the right upper carrying the axe, the right lower in *abhaya*. The upper left which carries the deer is hidden from view from the front, while the left arm embraces His consort below the hip. Please observe the position of the palm of the lower left arm placed below between the hip and the thigh. The result is that the curves in the flexion of the middle portion of the bodies are brought nearer, while in the previous *alingana* form in Cat. No. 24, the two hips of Parvati and Siva are getting away from each other.

A high *jatamakuta* and a *karandamakuta* with *siraschakras* adorn the heads of Siva and Parvati as usual. *Makarakundala* and *patrakundala* hang in the right and left ears of Siva. *Bahulamalas* in the shoulders are rendered prominently in this image also. Siva and Parvati are also endowed with the usual decorative features.

While the figures of Siva and Parvati are slim and slender in the group described earlier, the present figures under description are chubby. The above feature and other ornamental details place the present group in the post-Chola period somewhat later than the Prodoshamurti described in Cat. No. 24.



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CHAPTER VI

TIRIPURANTAGAR - GENERAL INFORMATION

Tiripurantaga is the image of Siva where he is shown as the destroyer of the three demons - *Tiripuras.*

2. According to legend, three demons, in the form of flying fortresses of iron, silver and gold, were destroying everything. The Gods were unable to fight them; they therefore appealed to Siva for redress. But they were so proud that they thought that their help was indispensable to Siva and offered to co-operate with him in the destruction of the *Tiripuras.* Though Siva did not need their help, he accepted their offer out of His Grace. The story continues in the Yajur Veda that Siva did actually fight with the three demons using the bows and arrows in destroying them.

3. The South Indian version of the same valiant deed of Siva is quite a different story. When everything was prepared ready and Siva stood there, all Gods began to think that Siva could destroy the *Asuras* only with their help. This thinking provoked the laughter of Siva. As He laughed at the ego of the Gods in their idea of helping Him, the *Tiripuras* were burnt to ashes. Siva never fought the demons.

4. The world *'pura'* means the bonds-*Thiripuram* the triple bonds that fetter the soul, *viz anavam* (the ego), karma (effects) of good & bad acts that follow the soul of everybody, past and present, and *maya* (the attractions of the world). Thus *Tiripura Samharam* is the destruction of the bondage *(malams)* that follows the soul of every body, including the Gods by the ultimate grace of Siva, as taught by Saiva Siddhanta philosophy.

5. The puranas contain truths dressed up in myths and stories, to suit the week understanding of the majority. The hard task of interesting the multitude in metaphysics is achieved easily in India. The following verses of Tirumoolar and Manickavasager. Will amplify what happened still later:

1. அப்பணி செஞ்சடை ஆதி புராதனர்
முப்புரம் செற்றனர் என்பர்கள் மூடர்கள்
முப்புர மாவது மும்மல காரியம்
அப்புரம் எரித்தமை யார்அறிவாரே. – திருமூலர்

"Fools say that Siva with Ganga on his braided hair destroyed the cities. It was the bonds **Malas** that were destroyed. Who knows what happened later" Tirumoolar.

i) The Answer is quoted from Tiruvachagam

2. எண்ணுடை மூவர்இராக்கதர்கள் எரிபிழைத்துக்
கண்ணுதல் எந்தை கடைத்தலைமுன் நின்றதற்பின்
எண்ணிலி இந்திரர் எத்தனையோ பிரமர்களும்
மண்மிசை மால்பலர் மாண்டனர் காண்தோனோக்கம்" – திருவாசகம்

After the three Purams were burnt by Siva they stood as dwarapalakas (door guardians) at the portals of the Lord. Whereafter many Indras, Brahmas and Vishnus have disappeared. Let our girls sing the glory of Siva.

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Cat. 26. TRIPURANTAGA - SIVA

Keezayur Nagapattinam Tk.
9th-10th Century A.D.
Ht. Total: 76 cm.
Wt: 38.025 Kg.
A. G. Br. No. 58

This standing image of Tripurantaga Siva was collected from keezayur temple which had been in existence prior to 7th Century A.D. It is one of the best specimens of early Chola art. Another image of SukhasanamurtiSiva in a majestic sitting pose-of the same early Chola period has been collected from the same temple and is described under Cat. No. 42.

LXII

The figure is characteristic of the early Chola period with its fine anatomic precision, elongated torso, long face and sparse decoration. This sculpture has many iconographic details in common with the Kalyanasundara marriage group under worship in the Vadakkalathur temple which is in the same area of Keezayur village.

The image has been rubbed off a little, especially in the face, during worship in the temple. The God stands in *tribhanga* on a circular plate, which is usually embedded in a *padmapeedam* attached to a *bhadrapeedam*. The plate alone was available in the collection. The axe in the right upper arm was found broken.

A high flattened *jatamakuta* crowns the head. No *siraschakra* was provided for the image. As special features of this image of Tripurantaga, it may be noticed that the

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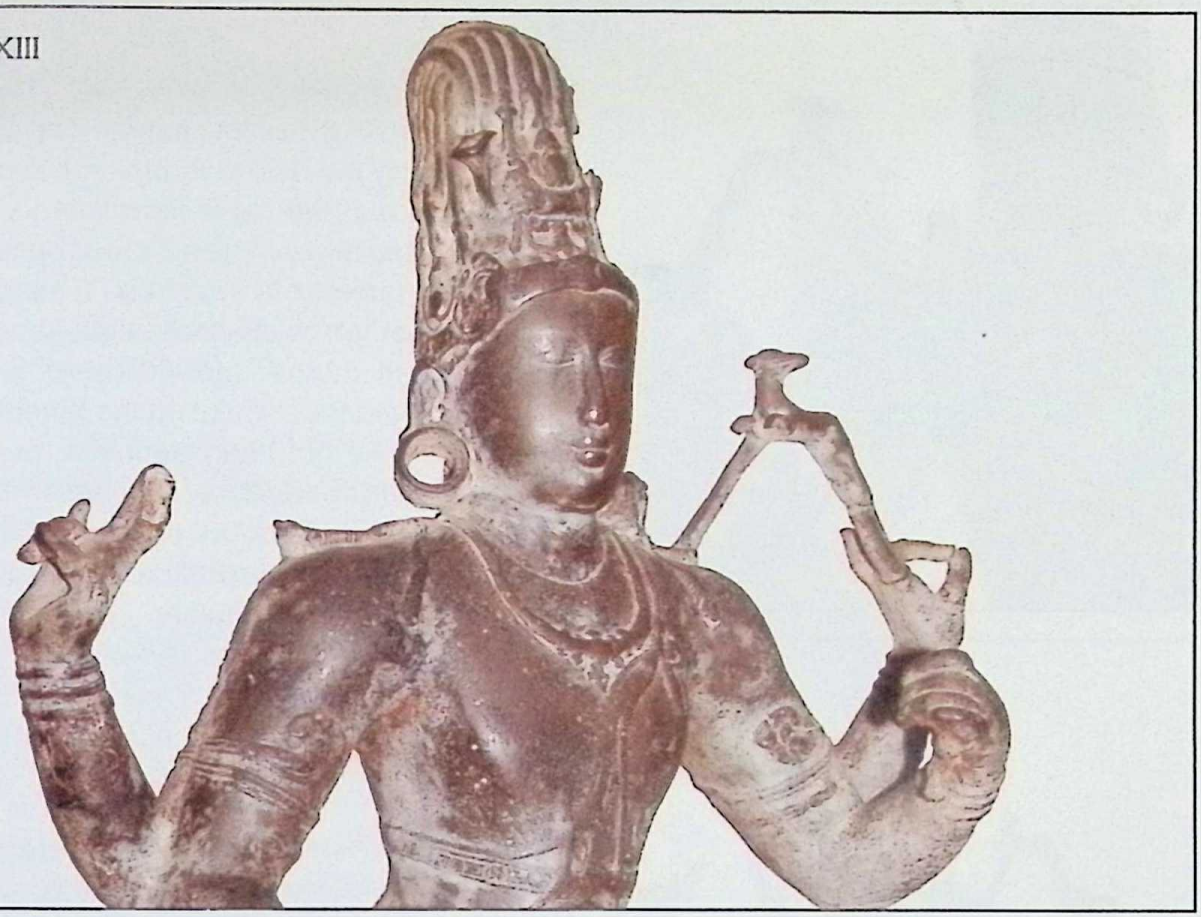
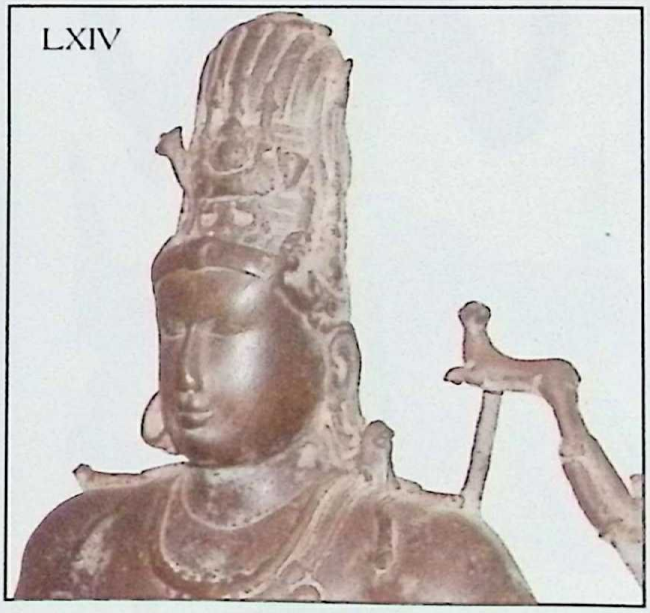
LXIII



datura flower on the jatamakuta and the patrakundala in the ear are on Siva's right side instead of their usual positions on the left side. The usual makarakundala is also substituted by a simhakundala (lion faced). Symmetric with the datura flower on the right front of the jatamakuta, is seen a broken remnant which once carried some kind of ornament, now impossible to identify. From out of the hair detailed on the back of the head ten locks of hair emerge, spreading in a circle on the shoulders behind. Two of them flow on the shoulders on either side in the place of a flowered bahulamala.

LXIV



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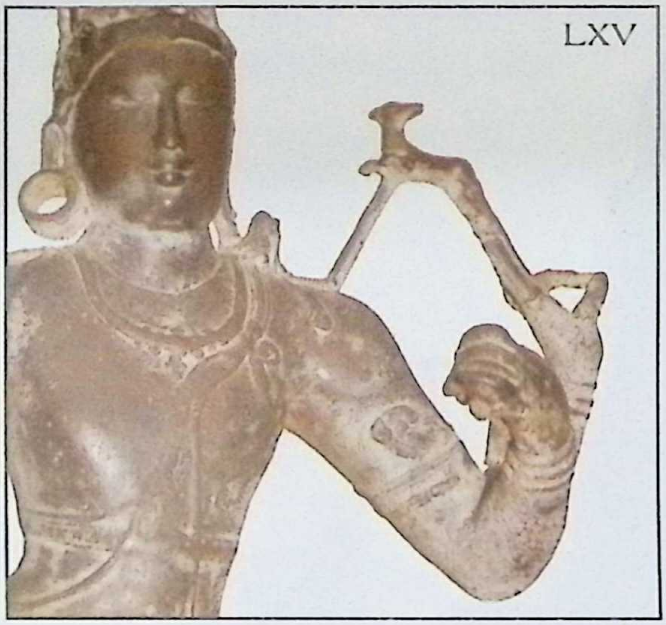
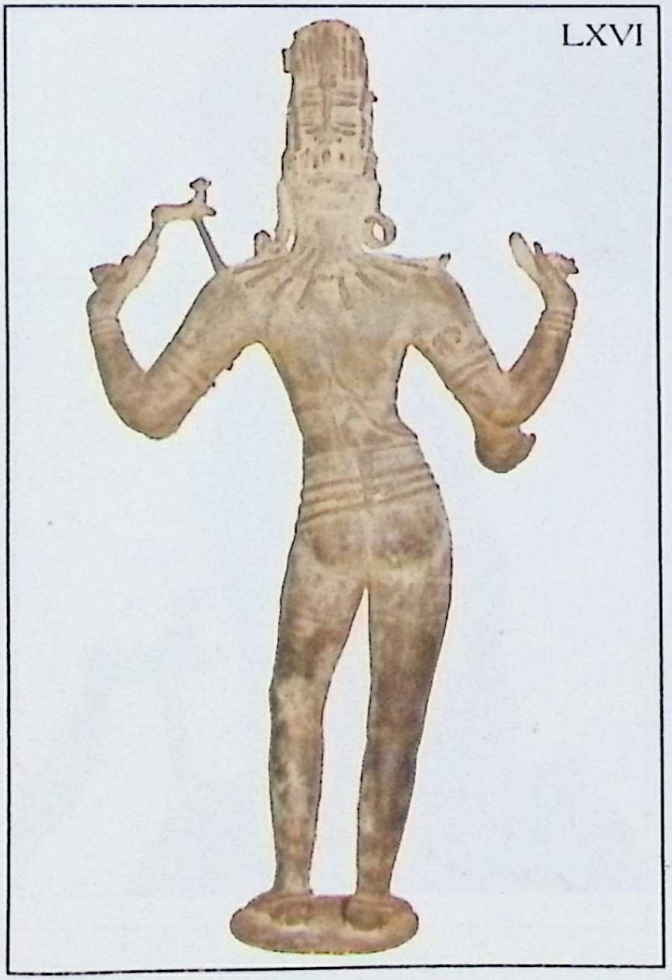


LXV

The God has four hands. The upper two holding the axe (axe broken) and the antelope, and the lower in *kataka* to hold the bow and arrow. The left lower hand still holds the broken bit of the bow. It may also be noticed that the channels, through which the molten mother metal flowed to the antelope and the axe during the process of casting, have not been removed, but left intact to provide additional supports to them. Remnant of such broken part in respect of the hand which carried the axe can still be seen on the right shoulder. Such similar devices can be seen in few other images (vide Cat. No. 18, etc.). Three wristlets for each wrist and angada of plumage are the only ornaments of the hands.



LXVI

Two streamers *(skandamala)*, characteristic of early Chola images, single necklace of *rudra-kanti, yajnopavita* of three strands, one running vertically down to the waistline, *brahmabandha* knot and *udarabandha* form the simple decorative features of the powerful torso of this image. The brocaded undergarment is held by a waistgirdle of three strands with a metallic *makara*-clasp. Simple *kachcha* (pleat) can also be seen behind tucked in, and not protruding as in later style. *Padasaras* adorn the legs.

The bronze is sparsely decorated. But its fine anatomy places it among the masterpieces of early Chola art.

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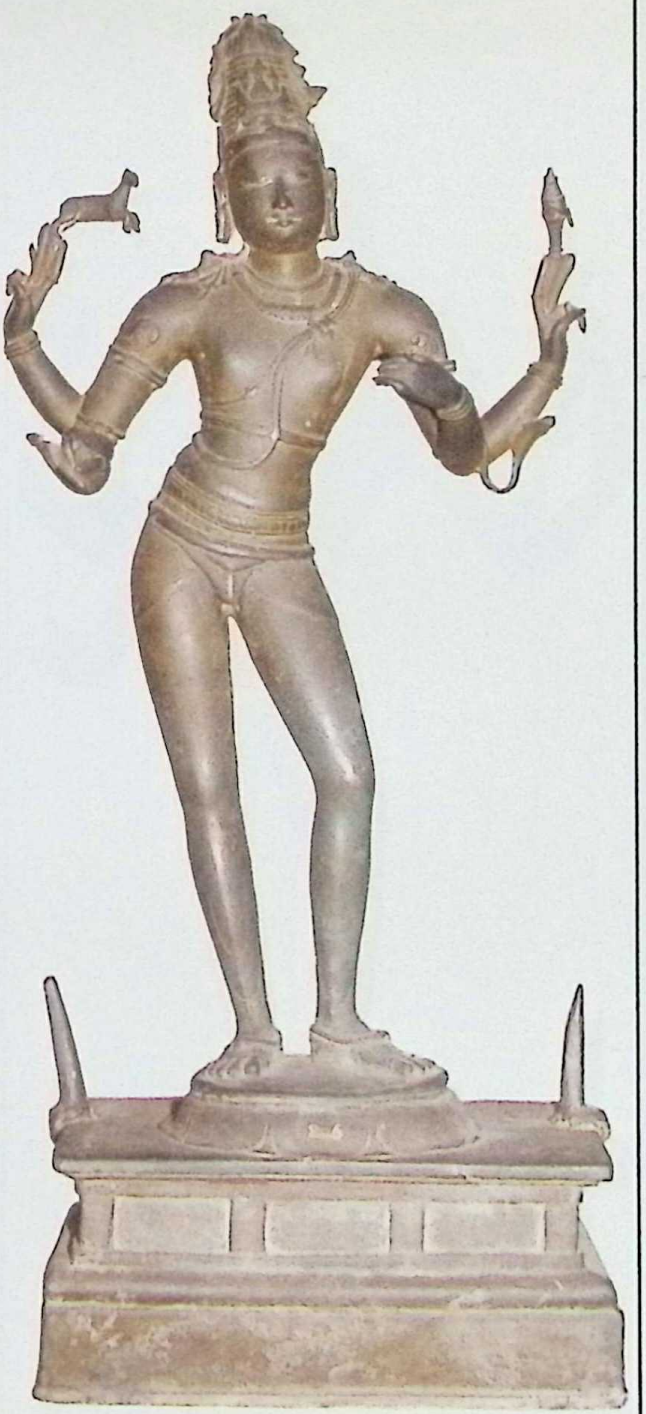
LXVII



Cat. 27. TRIPURANTAGA-SIVA.

Thanjavur Town.
10th Century A.D.
Ht: Total 81 cm.
without Ped : 64 cm.
Wt: 29.675 Kg.
A. G. Br. No. 26

This Tripurantaga image is a lean figure with slender legs and a realistic facial expression.

The God is standing in *tribhanga* on a low *padmapeedam* attached to a large rectangular *bhadrapeedam* with tenons for the support of a *prabhavali.* A handsome simple conical *jatamakuta* with flower decorations on the sides and on the top adorn the head. *Siraschakra* is shaped like a wheel with simple spokes.

Eleven locks of hair emerge from the *jatamakuta,* out of which seven are arranged in a circular array over the nape of the neck while the remaining four curl down the shoulders, two on each side. The usual three-forked streamer of strings with jewellery as *skandamala* is seen on the right shoulder. A single flower blossom is substituted for a row of *bahulamala* flowers. The characteristic backside pendant is also seen behind hanging below the curls of hair. The distended ear lobes are empty. The third eye on the forehead is present.

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LXVIII

The well-formed torso has two necklaces, and *yajnopavita* of two strands with the *brahmabandha* knot and an *udarabandha*. The under-garment is a simple loin cloth and it is held by a plain waist-girdle without the usual *makara* or *simhamukha* clasp. The plain *kachcha* with a small flap in front is tucked behind inside the girdle.

The God has the usual four hands. The upper arms hold the antelope and the axe between the fingers. The positions of antelope on the right side and the *parasu* (axe) on the left are deviations in this image. The lower two hands are in *kataka*, in position to hold the bow and arrow. Three wristlets for each hand, *bajibandha*, and *angada* of plumage are the decorative features of the hands. The addition of a hissing serpent on the left arm similar to those found on the right arm of Nataraja images is a noticeable feature of this Tripurantaga image, in which the axe and the antelope are also reversed. On stylistic grounds, we may tentatively assign this figure an early Chola date.

Sri Sivaramamurti identified the image as Vinadhara. But how could Siva play on the vina with his hand in the *kataka* position? Sri Sivaramamurti has grouped the image in the transitional period on account of the several early Chola characteristics which are observed in the upper portion of the image. The workmanship on the lower part, however, tends to contradict this .

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LXIX

Cat. 28. TRIPURANTAGA-SIVA.

Mayuram Town.
10th Century A.D.
Ht. Total: 114 cm.
without Ped: 104 cm.
Wt: 79.300 Kg.
A.G. Br. No. 19

The image was obtained from Mayuranathaswami temple where it was deposited. It is a large imposing image showing Chola art at its best. The upper right arm including the hand the lower right hand and the right ear lobe bear evidence of later restorations. The *siraschakra* is missing, but its stump is seen behind.

The God is standing on a *padmapeedam* with the left leg bent, not to the extent that it could be called *anchita* (flexion). The face is very realistic with a pronounced third eye in the centre of the fore-head. The ears have distended lobes, which are empty. The broad fillet flanked with flower designs at the sides, adds grace to the expressions of the face. A highly ornate *jatamakuta* with the usual *datura* flower and the crescent moon on the right adorn the head. The back reveals a semicircular array of thirteen locks of hair grace fully arranged.

The torso reveals broad chest and sholders, the ornaments being two necklaces, one simple and another of

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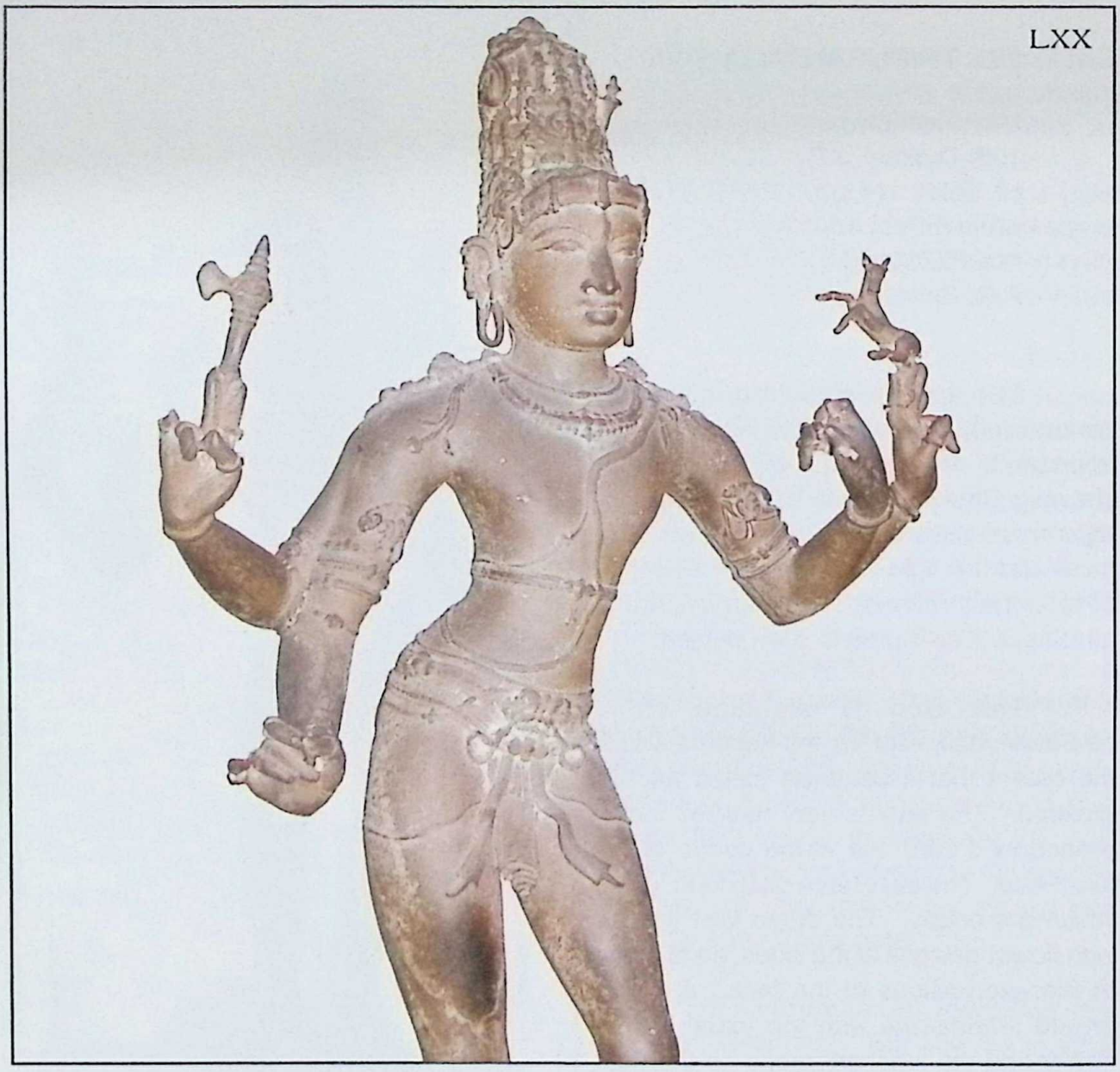

rudrakanti type, *udarabandha*, and a two stranded *yajnopavita* with its prominent *brahmabandha* knot. Bahulamala flows down elegantly on each shoulder. A pretty three-forked streamlet of strings with jewellery attached is gracefully rendered in front over the right shoulder, while a simple streamer of hair hangs in front on the left shoulder. He wears the loincloth with its median flap and a metallic clasp of *simhamukha* design, and the *kachcha* pleat is seen protruding at the back. Simple *padasaras* with elegant *mukappu* adorn the feet.

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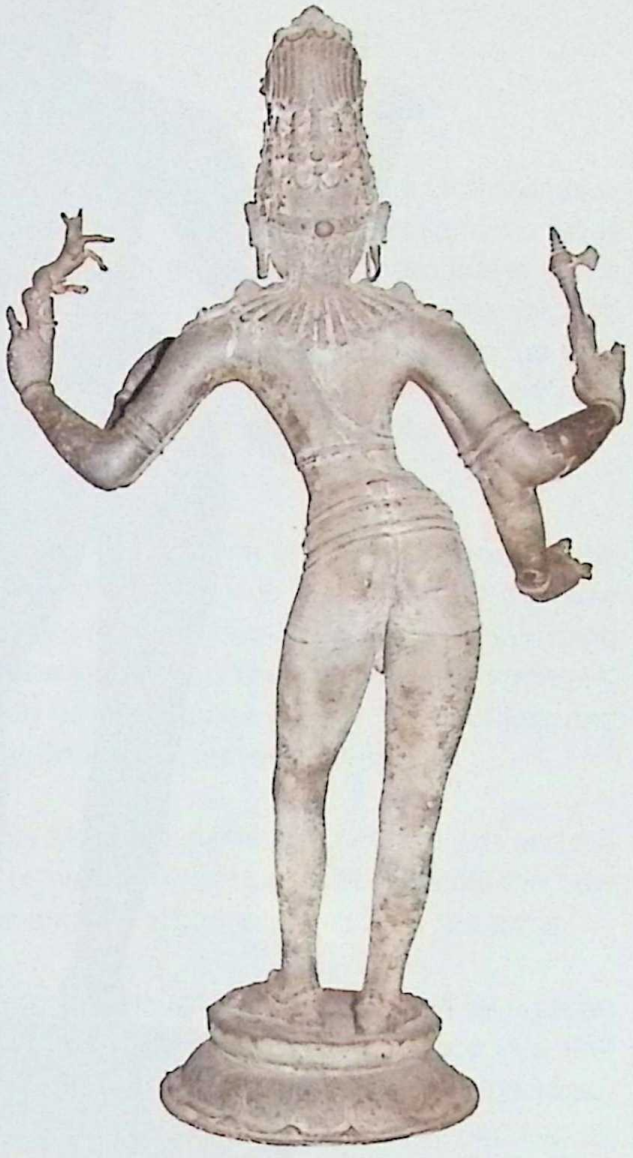
The upper two arms carry, as usual, the axe and the antelope. The latter has been rendered in a very realistic style with its head and face directly facing the worshipper. Single wristlet, *bajibandha*, *angada* of plumage and finger-rings are the decorative features of the hands. The lower two arms in *kataka* are in position to hold the bow and arrow.

A suggestion that the image may be a Vinadhara Dakshinamurti is difficult to accept. The appropriate fingers of each hand are not in the correct position to manipulate a *vina.* Further, a creeping gana or *muyalaka* has not been placed under Siva's foot, as in the Vinadhara figure described under Cat. No.31.

Mr. Barret dates this about 975 A.D., which we can accept.

LXXI



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LXXII

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Cat. 29. TRIPURANTAGA-SIVA.

Thanjavur Town.
10th Century A.D
Ht. Total: 91 cm.
without Ped: 76 cm.
Wt: 56.800 Kg.
A.G. Br. No. 20

This is a striking image of the later phase of early Chola period. The God stands in *abhanga* on a circular base attached to a *bhadrapeedam*. His right leg is firm and the left is slightly bent. The highly ornamented *jatamakuta* with its elegant tiaras in front and at the sides, presenting the usual *datura* flower, crescent moon, Ganga and the hissing serpent, add grace to the handsome face of this figure. The addition of mermaid Ganga on the right side of the head dress in this Tripurantaga image is a special feature rarely found elsewhere. The expression is one of complete repose and serenity, with the third eye in the centre of the forehead. Vide. Pl. LXXIII

Ten locks spread out behind in a semicircle. The addition of the characteristic early Chola pendant hanging in the centre adds beauty to the backside. Two locks of hair flow down on either shoulder, parallel to the usual *bahulamala*. Two more locks of hair hang down vertically in curls on either side in front of the shoulders. The provision of a streamlet of strings with jewelled pendant also laid vertically as *skandamala* on the right shoulder and a similar one on the back in the centre are early Chola decorative features.

The four arms are set naturally. The upper two are in position to hold the axe and the antelope both of them are missing. The lower arms are in *kataka* position to hold the bow and arrow. Each wrist has three bangles, while *angada* of plumage decorate the arms.

The graceful torso is partitioned, as it were, into an upper and lower part by a broad *udarabandha*. A single necklace of *rudrakanti* variety adorns the neck. There is a fine *yajnopavita* of seven strands, three strands of which branch out and flow down the torso. One of them passes underneath the cloth as in Vishnu figures. The loins are covered up by a low schematic cloth with *kiritimukha* and waist clasp median flap and side streamlets. *Padasaras* on the feet and rings for all fingers and toes may be noticed.

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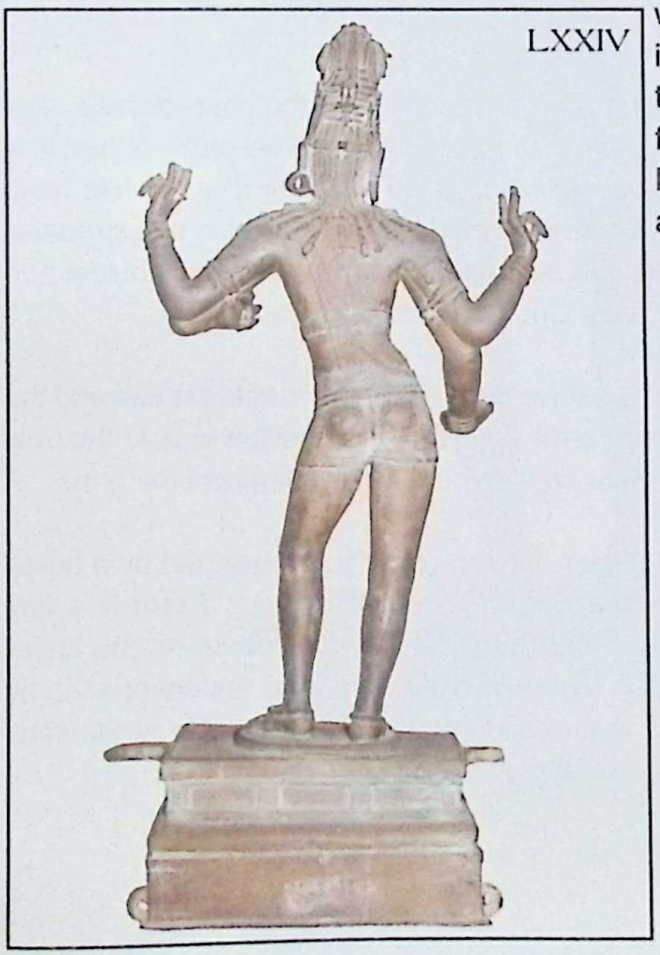
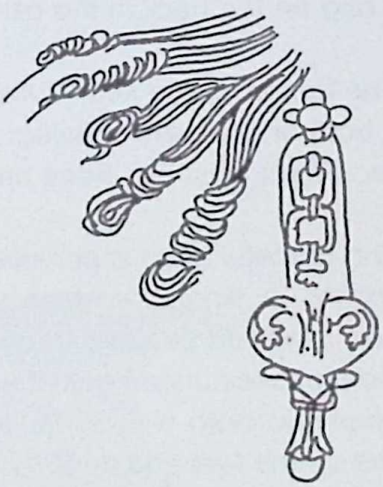
LXXIII



LXXIV

Sri Sivaramamurti has labelled the image as part of the Tiruvelvikudi collection, but there is no evidence for this in the records of the Art Gallery. On the other hand, there is evidence that this was in the collection of Thanjavur Devasthanam the Brihadeeswara temple at least from 1928 onwards. Confirmation for the above is available from the records of the Art Gallery. The local information that it was for a long time in the local Rajagopalaswami temple, where it was temporarily stored, may be correct. The present Rajagopalaswami temple appears to have been an earlier Siva temple and quite a number of sculptures were stored in it. The image has been indentified by Mr. Barret as Tripurantaka of the last quarter the 10th century A.D., hailing from Rajagopalaswami temple, Thanjavur. Both the date and the place may be accepted.



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LXXV

Cat. 30. TRIPURANTAGA-SIVA

Mayuram Town
12th-13th Century A.D.
Ht: Total 76 cm.
without Ped: 66 cm.
Wt: 35.600 Kg.
A. G. Br. No. 36

The God is standing is *abhanga* on a *padmapeedam*, with the usual inconographic details of this form of God. Three wristlets for each hand, *bajibandha* and armlet of arabesque work on the arms are seen. Four necklaces *udarabandha* and three-stranded *yajnopavita* and *brahmabandha* mark the torso. The shoulders reveal a loop and a streamlet on either side symmetrically. The face is one of pointed features. The left ear wears a *patrakundala* and the right a stud. The *siraschakra* behind is ornate and formalised. The waist-girdle holding the undergarment is provided with *simhamukha* clasp and square median loop. Loop pendants hang down from the waist-girdle. A *virakkazal* encircles the left ankle while an anklet is worn on the right leg. *Padasaras* adorn the feet.

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CHAPTER VII

VINADHARA DAKSHINAMURTI - GENERAL INFORMATION.

Siva is considered to be the pastmaster in *yoga*, music and dancing. As an inspirer of the mystic truth by his *mouna* (silence), He is very popular in the south by the name Dakshinamurti, the 'Lord of the South'

The legend about this form of Siva is that the sages approached the Lord seeking an exposition of *gnana.* But his exposition was of a unique kind-one of unbroken silence with the eloquent gesture of the right hand in *chinmudra*, which the sages understood. Wisdom dawned upon the sages and the world without an exposition in spoken words.

As a reminder of the gospel of silence, the inclusion of a Dakshinamurti image is an invarible feature of all Siva temples in the south. An idol in stone is enshrined in the outside niche on the south wall of the shrine *(garbhagriha),* facing south. In forms except Vinadhara Dakshinamurti images, he is seated in *Virasana* with the left leg crossed over the right. The right foot always tramples a crouching demon, *Apasmarapurusha,* who is the symbolic personification of the bondage attached to the soul. According to Saiva Siddhanta the bonds *(pasam)* are of three kinds: *anavam* (the ego), *karma* (the effects of good and bad deeds, past and present, that adhere to the soul) and *maya* (the principle of matter). These bonds must be crushed before the soul is able to enjoy His final grace. The same demon is seen under the foot of Nataraja, the cosmic dancer. The banyan tree and its shade symbolizes the cosmos, just as Nataraja's *prabhavali* does.

The *chin-mudra* of the *abhaya* hand of Dakshinamurti denotes supreme knowledge and exposition of the mystic truth *gnana.* The forefinger bends to touch the base of the thumb, released from contact with the other three fingers, each of which stands out separately and also separated from the forefinger. The thumb is the symbol of God, the forefinger the soul, and the other three fingers represent the three bonds of the soul (viz.,*anavam, karma* and *maya*). Thus the *chin-mudra* signifies that once the soul is freed of the three bonds, it attains the final union with God. This fact is explained in Thiruanaikka Puranam.

"மும்மலம் வேறுபட் டொழிய மொய்த்துயிர்
அம் மலர்த் தாள்நிழல் அடங்கும் உண்மையைக்
கை மலர்க் காட்சியில் கதுவ நல்கிய
செம் மலை அலது உளம் சிந்தியாதாரோ"

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The form of Dakshinamurti adopted in bronze images which are intended to be taken round the streets or inside temples is therefore in a standing pose with the suggestion of the God playing on the vina. (C.F. also P. 94) The philosophical idea underlying this form the ultimate cataclysm of the worn-out universe and its subsequent resurrection - is best expressed in a Thevaram hymn sung by Tirunavukkarasu Nayanar (Appar), relating to Tiruvengadu village:

"ஓதத்து ஒலிமடங்கி ஊருண்டு ஏறி
ஒத்துலகம் எல்லாம் ஒடுங்கியபின்
வேதத்து ஒலிகொண்டு வீணைகேட்பார்
வெண்காடு மேவிய விகிர்தனாரே"

When all the bustle of this overgrown universe is subsided and brought to a standstill, the valiant Lord of Tiruvengadu traverses the cataclysm, plays His vina, hears the rhythm and the sweet sounds of scriptures (Vedas), and again recreates the cosmos.

The samipya spirit and the idea of closeness to God which the World sees in music and dance is integrated in the presentation of Dakshinamurti in this form as playing on the vina. The bhakti cult represented in the hymns of the Thevaram, Tiruvachagam, and the Divyaprabandam centres around this idea. Devotees see God in the sounds, rhythms and harmonics of music.

Two idols of Vinadhara Dakshinamurti are available in the Art Gallery. They are described in the series that follow. The stringed instrument Vina is not actually seen in the bronze images. Indian Art is great for its subtlety and range of suggestion. Look for instance at the position of the hands and fingers-"Heard Melodies are Sweet, but those unheard are Sweeter".

"கல்லாலின் புடையமர்ந்து நான்மறை
ஆறங்கம் முதல் கற்றகேள்வி
வல்லார்கள் நால்வருக்கும் பூரணமாய்
மறைக்கும் அப்பாலாய்
எல்லாமாய் அல்லவுமாய் இருந்ததனை
இருந்தபடி இருந்து காட்டிச்
சொல்லாமற் சொன்னதனை நினையாமல்
நினைந்து பவத்தொடக்கை வெல்வாம்"

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Cat. 31. VINADHARA DAKSHINAMURTI - SIVA

Ponvilaindanpatti Sholagampatti - Thanjavur Tk.
Ht: Total: 90 cm. without Ped: 76 cm.
Wt: 56.300 Kg. Image alone : 42 Kg.
7th-8th Century A.D.
A. G. Br. No. 225

The Siva under description is presented as Dakshinamurti with His arms in a pose to hold the *vina* (the stringed instruement), the fingers in position to play the instrument. Except for the position of the fingers and inclusion of an *Apasmara (Muyalaka)* under the left foot of the image, the iconographic form is the same as that of Tripurantaga described earlier.

Dakshinamurti is in a standing pose with the right leg firm and straight. The left foot is slightly bent (*in kunchita*), the foot being placed over the crouching demon (*Muyalaka* usually seen under the foot of Nataraja). The image and the demon below rest on a rectangular base plate which is suitably accommodated over a rectangular *bhadrapeedam*.

The *bhadrapeedam* is a separate piece provided with a seating for the base plate of the image. A set of four rings both at its top and its bottom is seen, the former intended to secure the base plate of the image to it and the later to secure the image during processions.

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Two broken stumps of the tenons may be observed on either side of the lower *bhadrapeedam* at the top. This is for insertion of a *prabhavali* which was not available in the collection. The broken stumps are placed obliquely, so that *prabhavali* is in a line with the pose of the image.

The head is crowned with a highly ornate *jatamakuta* which is of the type found in very early Chola images. The crescent moon and the hissing serpent on the right side and the *datura* flower on the left are sculptured in bold relief to give a striking and pleasing appearance. *Chudamani* and flower designs add grace to the head dress. No design of the skull in the centre had been provided. The usual *siraschakra* on the back is of a simple type of the early Chola period. There are ten ringlets of hair, of which eight adorn the nape of the neck and two roll down the sholders on either side in the place of the *bahulamala* of flowers. The streamer on the right shoulder flowing at right angles from the sholder is a three-forked tassel of necklace strings, displayed prominently. The vertical streamer of hair-locks usually shown on the left is absent.

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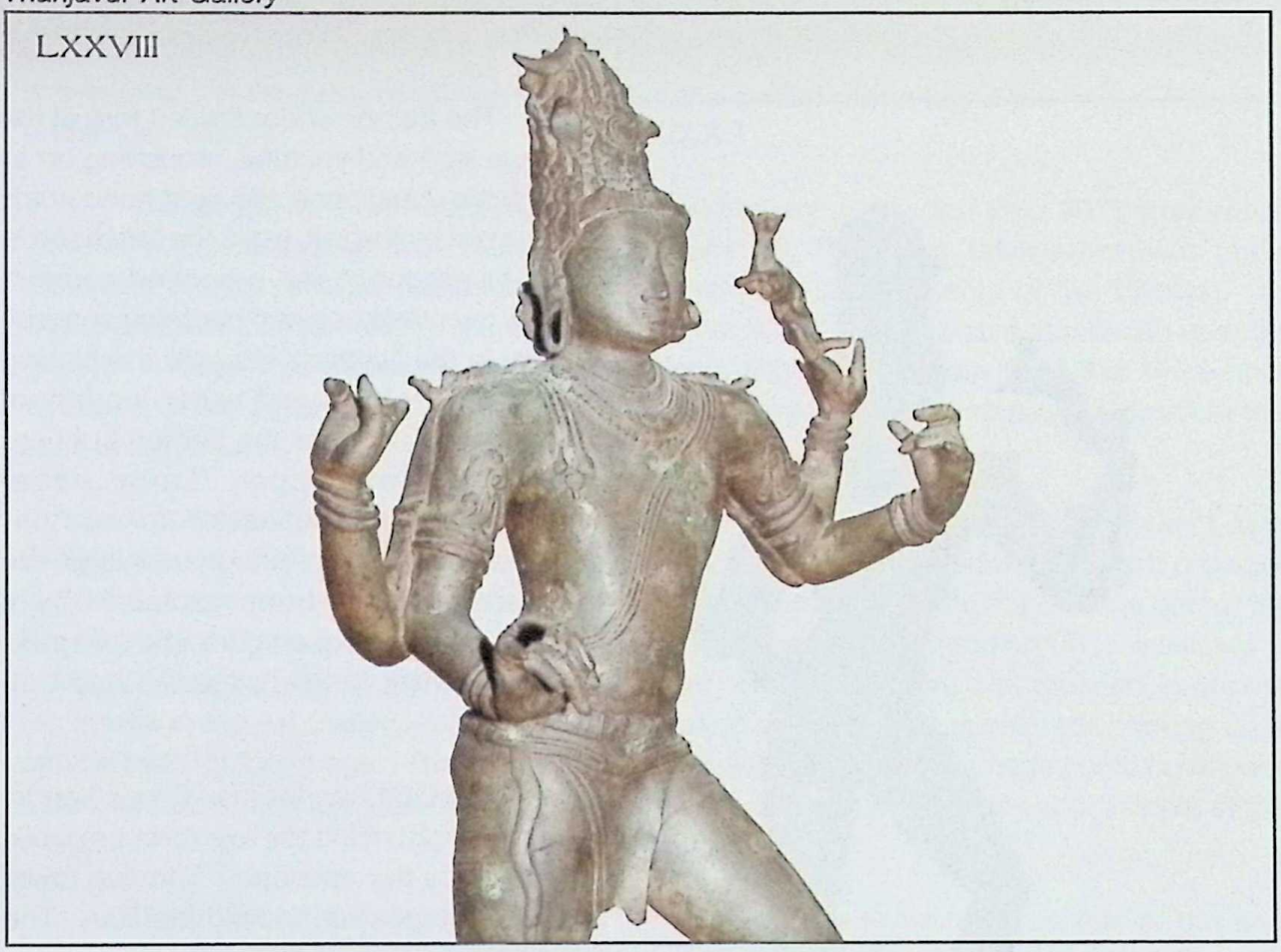
LXXVIII



The face is square-set, and beams with an expression concentration on the music that the God plays on the *vina*. The nose is natural and the lips well set to bring out the expression. The eyebrows are softly modelled without being dented or line-modelled as in later figures. The central eye is marked on the forehead. The right ear lobe is empty while the left is adorned with a *patrakundala* which is compact, narrow and protruding in the front.

Three necklaces, a simple *kanti, kasumalai* and a plain *yajnopavita* of three strands without the bifurcating strands are the only decorative ornaments of the flat chest. The absence of *udarabandha* adds simplicity and grace to the torso of excellent proportions. The hip lines have been elegantly rendered. The *ardhoraka* (shorts) is held in position by a metallic belt of floral designs without the *simhamukha* clasp. A simple tasselled loin flap hangs down in front between the thighs to cover the genitals. This has been tucked up at the back to form the pleat. The long vertical tassel hanging down in front of the right thigh adds beauty to the slim legs, which are otherwise bare except for one anklet without any ornamentation.

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The demon under the left foot of the image is lean and youthful, crouching on all fours in the usual pose, His right hand holds the serpent by the tail, while the left hand in *sarpa-mudra* (pose like a hooded serpent) fondles over the hood of the hissing serpent. Usually in the Nataraja images, the hissing snake held by the dwarf under the foot of Nataraja images faces the demon but here it faces the worshipper. Large *patra-kundalas* adorn the ears. In another specimen of the same Vinadhara image, the dwarf demon has been replaced by a pleasing yet grotesque figure of a *sivagana* intently listening to Siva's music (Vide Cat. No. 32)

The God has the usual four hands. The upper right holds the axe (broken) while the left holds the antelope. The two lower hands are in position to hold the *vina.* The middle finger is so set to give the impression of plucking the *"sarini"* string of the vina, while the corresponding finger of the left hand is placed on the lower note in the *madya sthayee* on the first string *"sarini"*. The position of the thumb, and the first finger of the left hand and the gap between them may be specially noted. They are wide apart in this image, while they are closer to hold the bow-in Tripurantaga images in order to hold the bow (Cat. Nos. 26 to 30.) The palm and the thumb sliding over the *vina-danda* (the shaft of the instrument)

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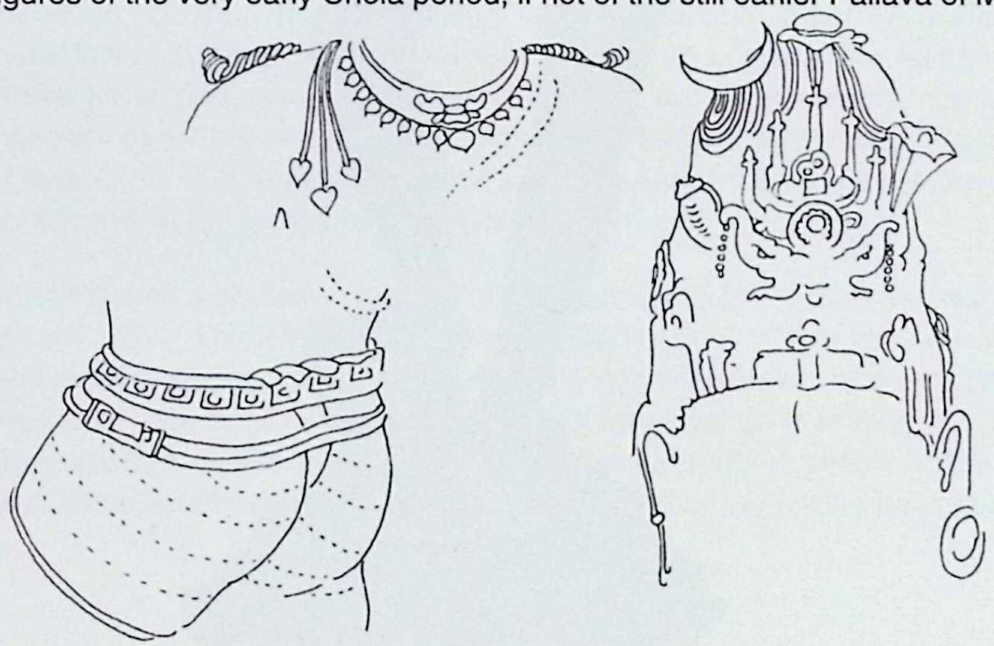
is suggested in the pose of the left hand. See the similar rendering in the image described under Cat. No.32.

The image is a new acquistion to the Art Gallery during the year 1975 from a Kali Temple in Ponvilaindanpatti, a hamlet of Solagampatti, Thanjavur Taluk, which was under the sway of Mutharayars (vassals under the Pallavas, predecessors of the Cholas). An unpublished inscription referring to the Mutharayars is still available on a stone slab near the temple. There is no ancient temple in the village, although villagers state that there once existed a Chola-period temple in the village. Over the intervening centuries it is possible that such a temple may have been destroyed.

Considering the characteristics of this unique piece, which present the style of early Pallava art, and the *bhadrapeedams* of the pre-Chola type (associated with Jain art) provided for it, the image has to be associated with an ancient temple of some importance before the 9th Century A.D. at this place of near this locality. No specific information is available at present, However, it may be stated here that the villagers who were persuaded to deposit the image in the Art Gallery said that mud and earth were found originally still sticking on to certain parts of the image. The above information suggests that the image could have been a treasure trove find in some other locality, removed and preserved in the Kali Temple of this village.

The image is an outstanding one. The image has to be rated as one of the best classical figures of the very early Chola period, if not of the still earlier Pallava of Mutharayar epoch.



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LXXX

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Cat. 32. VINADHARA DAKSHINAMURTI-SIVA.

Thanjavur Town.
11th Century A.D.
Ht: Total 91 cm. without Ped: 84 cm.
Wt: 60.750 Kg.
A. G. Br. No. 21

The image is from Brihadeeswara temple, Thanjavur. This is mentioned in Rajendra Chola's inscriptions in the temple, referring to Brahmadirajan's gifts to the temple.

The God is standing in elegant *tribhanga* on a *padmapeedam*, in a frontal pose with all His well-built limbs correctly proportioned. The sculptor has achieved an emphasis as much on curves as on angles, the curves being relegated to regions such as the hip, the shoulders, the chin, the cheek, the arm pit and the left knee. The angles, however, persist where they should exist in the normal process off branching of for bends such as the knee, the first and the elbow. The simple loin-cloth is suggestive of a piece of elephant hide. With the sparse tasselled loin-flap covering the privates, the sculptor has managed to indicate that, with a minimum of clothing, it was possible to endow the image of Siva with the grandeur due to Him as if He were lavishly dressed. The figure brings out an essential motif of Chola art, viz., the beauty of the human body. The God seems dressed and also not dressed. Such a tendency is also noticed in other Chola masterpieces, as for example the Darasuram Bhikshatana stone sculpture in the Art Gallery. Over this scanty apparel is the early Chola girdle ornamentation, in three girdle series with a *kiritimukha* clasp. The feet have each a course of three loose padasaras. The toes have rings except the second toe of the right foot. The single footrest below the right leg has been mistaken by Sri. O.C. Gangooly for a *padukai*. There is no stud between the first and the second toe, and therefore the raised structure for the foot is not a *padukai*, as stated.

In keeping with a pervasive symmetry the *padmapeedam* is also a blossomed lotus in full concentric form. The left leg is in *kunchita* (slightly bent) and is held in position by a squatting pot-bellied singing gana, who has crept into the space. The *gana's* left hand receives the toe of assurance of the God, while his right hand is in singing gesticulation in praise or gratitude of such assurance. That this *gana* is a *prathmagana* is borne out by the broad necklace and *udarabandha*. Dakshinamurti seated on a rock below a tree spoke in

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silent language *(mauna)*. Only a select few understood, but the vast majority including the Gods could not understand His *"mauna"* language. So the God came out as a Vinadhara Dakshinamurti. When He played on the *vina* the whole world listened. The God's message *(Upadesa)* played became clear. The *gana* crouches not to miss a note, his face full of expectancy, his fat belly close to Siva. Generally an *apasmara* is shown under as being crushed in Nataraja figures. Please also see Cat. No.31.

Over the *padmapeedam* is incribed 6111eg on the upper surface behind the legs. We have no information as to when this was incised.

The upper hands of the god hold the axe and the antelope (missing). Except the middle, all the fingers wear rings. The lower right and the left are in position to hold a *vina*. The middle finger of the right hand is plucking the *sarini* string while the corresponding finger of the left hand is placed on the lower note in the *madya sthayee* on the *sarini* (first) string- The thumb and the first finger of the left hand are wide apart. Siva is about to play on a *vina*. This clinches the identity of this image as Vinadhara Dakshinamurti. (vide the similar hand positions in cat No. 31)

LXXXI

Three wristlets adorn each hand and a *nagavalaya* with hamsa plumage head and naga tail mark the region of the hind part of the arm where the *angada* should go. Over a powerful chest is a broad *yajnopavita* of three strings, a fourth string streaming away nearer the right armpit. A broad girdle is over the waist, rather higher up. The brahmabandha of the *yajnopavita* is an elegant and broad common knot. A series of five necklaces constitute the neck ornaments, closely covering the neck region with a set-up of mango leaves, rubies, dentils, chains and string designs. The usual single streamer of strings (*skandamala*) characterises the right shoulder. Horizontal floral streamers hang over both the shoulders symmetrically.

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LXXXII

The face is of a chubby, well-built and well-outlined handsome man. The nose is aquiline and grand. The nostrils are widened. It is as if He is intensely concentrating on the music that he is playing. The third eye is vertically posed between the brows. The right ear is empty. The left ear has the scroll *kundala (patrakundala)*. A fine *jatamakuta* adorns the head with serpent, datura and the crescent moon, clearly marked in their respective correct places. The skull was not provided.

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LXXXIII

On the nape of the neck hangs fourteen *jatas* (peacock-like) well groomed into spiral finishes. Traces of a *siraschakra* (broken) still remain. This image carries with it all the characteristics of the Chola sculpture of Rajaraja I exhibited in the Brihadeeswara temple, and as such, it must be placed in the Rajaraja I phase of early Chola art. Its sweetness and subtlety make it a great masterpiece of this period.

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CHAPTER VIII

SOMASKANDA - GENERAL INFORMATION

A beautiful and realistic version of Truth, Beauty and Love in the image of Somaskanda has been summarized by Manickavasakar in his Tiruvasakam verses "போற்றி திரு அகவல்" (Portri thiru ahaval) "அருமையில் எளிய அழகே போற்றி". It is a condensed version of the Truth in the greatest poetic hymn. It emphasizes the conception of God for those who cannot conceive God or understand the transcendence of Lord Siva, who links himself to man. It is possible for man to approach Him through Love. In the manifestation of nature, performance and the resultant beauty, Somaskandar connotes three phases, viz. transcendence - Siva, immanence Sakthi, and appearance - Muruga. Among all the meaningful values of the super-organic world, there is the integral value - the veritable summum bonun. Hence Somaskanda represents the indivisible unity of truth - Siva; Goodness Sakthi; and Beauty - Murugan.

Apart from the philosophical aspect mentioned above, the early Tamilian poets of the Sangam Age (3rd Century B.C. to 2nd Century A.D.) had emphasised the conception of the Trinity in the perfect and complete marriage, in the full development of family bliss.

The following lines give the poetic picture:

மறியிடைப் படுத்த மான்பிணைப் போல
புதல்வன் நடுவணன் ஆக நன்றும்
இனிது மன்ற அவர் கிடக்கை! முனிவின்றி
நீனிற வியலகம் சுவைஇய
ஈனும் உம்பரும் பெறவருங் குரைத்தே.

Like the begotten fawn amidst the two male & female deers, the revered son Skanda is held between His parents. Nothing more pleasing can there be in the world than to enjoy the scene of Skanda between Siva and Uma, his consort.

Yet another lyrical depiction, found in Kachiyappar's Skandapuranam, compares the divine family to parts of the day:

ஏலவார் குழல் இறைவிக்கும் தனக்கும்
பாலன் ஆகிய குமரவேள் நடுவுறும் பான்மை
ஞாலமேலுறும் இரவொடு பகலுக்கும் நடுவே
மாலையான தொன்றலின்றி வைகுமாற தொக்க

The rendering of the boy Kumaravel in the middle of Kamakshi and Ekambarar is akin to the pleasing twilight between day and night.

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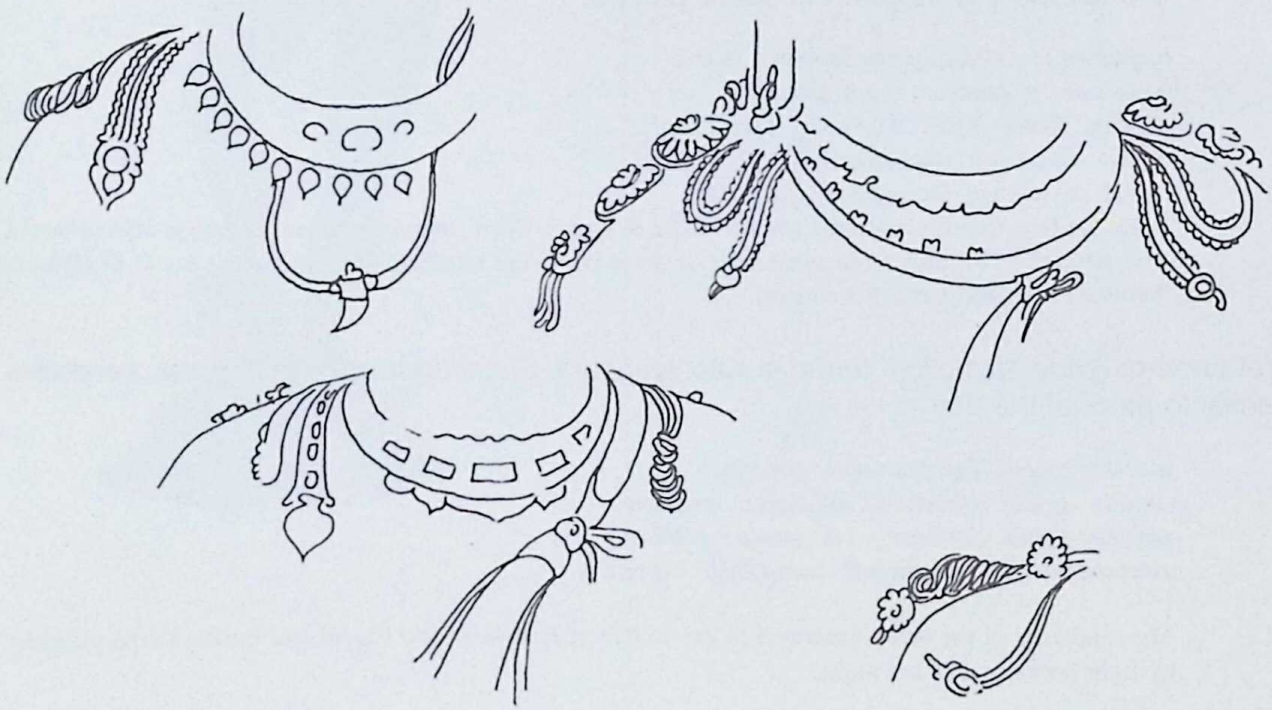
The scene in which Siva and Parvati appear with their son Muruga in between them is known as Somaskanda-murti. The concept and idea behind the image is that God is Sat, Chit and Ananda (Sa + Uma + Skanda); and this is the same as God the father, God the mother, or the holy ghost, and God the son alternatively, God as pure being or Spirit, God as Light that links him to humanity and God as Love.

This representation of Siva, his consort and his son, which forms an integral part of worship in Tamil country, is unique to south India. We do not find it in other regions of India. Stone carvings of Somaskanda at Mahabalipuram, Tirukkazhukundram, Kailasanathar temple and Ekambaranather temple in Kanchipuram indicate the importance attached to this form of Siva in Tamilnadu from at least Pallava times.

The message of Rabindranath Tagore in his "Aranyakas" may be quoted again: "The view of this world. which India has taken, is summed up in one compound word-Sachidananda." The meaning is Reality which is essentially one as three phases. - the first - "Sath" which is the simple fact that things are; the fact which relates us to all, things through the relationship of common existence; the second is "Chit". Which is the fact that we know and that which relates to all things through the relationship of knowledge; the third is "Ananda". which unites us with all things through the relationship of Love.



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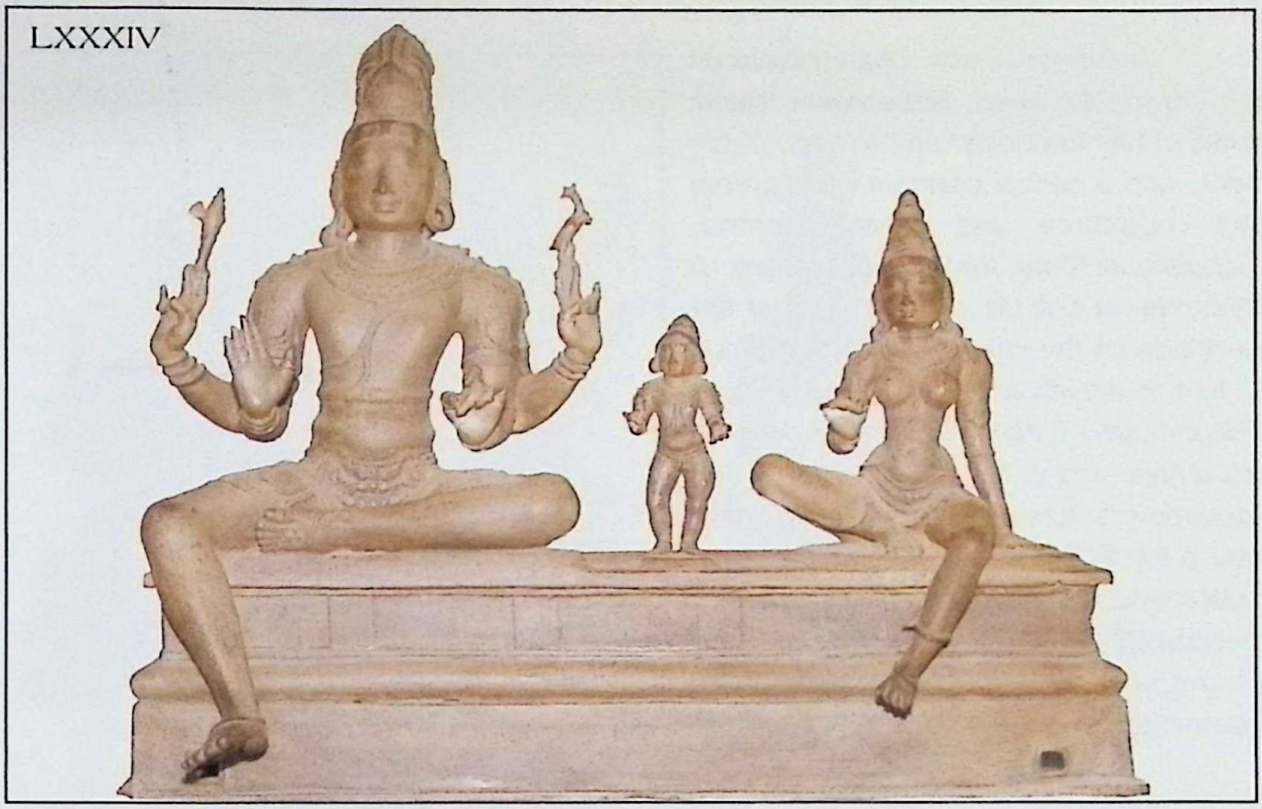

Cat. 33. SOMASKANDA GROUP-SIVA

Pattiswaram - Kumbakonam Tk.
Early 10th-11th Century

	Siva	Skanda	Uma
Ht. Total:	56 cm.	16 cm.	43 cm
without Ped:	41 cm.	15 cm.	33 cm.
Wt. Total:			43.950 Kg.
A.G. Br. No.			112

This group of Siva, Uma (Parvati) and Skanda may be seen seated (without separate *padmapeedam*) on a common long *bhadrapeedam* provided with holes for securing it during procession. Siva is seated in *lalitha* with right leg hanging down and left bent in resting. He has four hands, the upper left hand adjusting, as it were, the antelope on the finger tip The antelope looks behind at the God. The upper right hand holds the axe, the lower right indicates *abhaya* and the lower left is in *kataka*, i.e., in position to hold a flower. *Nagavalaya* as *angada* with plumage, *bajibandha* and a group of three bangles adorn the hands.

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LXXXV

Jatamakuta with *chandrakala* on left crowns the head. *Siraschakra*, seven locks of hair in ringlets on the nape of the neck, and a central pendant issuing from the necklace are seen behind. *Bahulamala* flows down the shoulders. A streamlet of tassels of the strings of the necklace on the right shoulder and a curl of hair on the left shoulder are early Chola decorations. Three necklaces (a *karai*, *a kasumalai* and a *kanthi*) a four stranded *yajnopavita,* three strands in one group and a fourth branching under the armpit, *udarabandha* close fitting shorts with loop pendants and *simhamukha* clasp, *kachcha* pleat behind, and elegant *padasaras* are the decorative features of the God.

The DEVI is seated with the left leg hanging down and the right leg tucked up in *utkutika*, out of deference to her lord. The Devi, of slender and graceful human proportions, has the appearance of the early fitst mother. An elegant *karandamakuta, makarakundalas* in the ears, *siraschakra* behind, seven ringlets of locks of hair on the nape of the neck, a close fitting tali string on the neck in addition to three necklaces (*kanthi, kasumalai* and *karai)*, single *yajnopavita*, a diaphanous undergarment extending to the ankles, six waist-girdles with loops, *bahulamala*, a streamer on either shoulder similar to Siva's, *angadas* of chevron pattern, *bajibandha*, wristlets of the *patli* type and *padasaras* are the decorative features that are applied to the figure without disturbing its fleshy apperance. Such was the purpose in the best early Chola art.

The child SKANDA is standing between His parents with a beautiful *kesabandha, patrakundalas* in the ears, two necklaces, a *channavira* on the torso, *bahulamala*, streamers on the shoulders, armlets, wristlets, *padasaras* and *kinkinimala* around the waist. His right hand holds a lotus and His left is in *varada*. He stands boldly in a spirit of confidence.

This set compares well with Tiruvalankadu Somaskanda group. An early Chola date is easily admissible. Siva Parvati and Skanda with their excellent; anatomical proportions and face full of expression rank this set as one of the best specimens of early Chola art.

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LXXXVI

Cat. 34. SOMASKANDA GROUP - SIVA.

Tirumullaivasal - Sirkali Tk.
11th Century A.D.

	Siva	Skanda	Uma
Ht. Total:	61 cm.	17 cm.	56 cm.
without Ped:	41 cm.	14 cm.	33 cm.
Wt. Total:			30.600 Kg.
A.G. Br. No.	39		40

The iconographic form and decorative features of the Somaskanda group are similar to those in the set described previously under Cat. No. 33 except for some variations. All the three images have been seated on separate *padmapeedams* over a combined *bhadrapeedam*.

Most of the early Chola characteristic features are continued, but the back side pendant is absent. The *yajnopavita* is of six strands with a *brahmabandha* knot. Two strands

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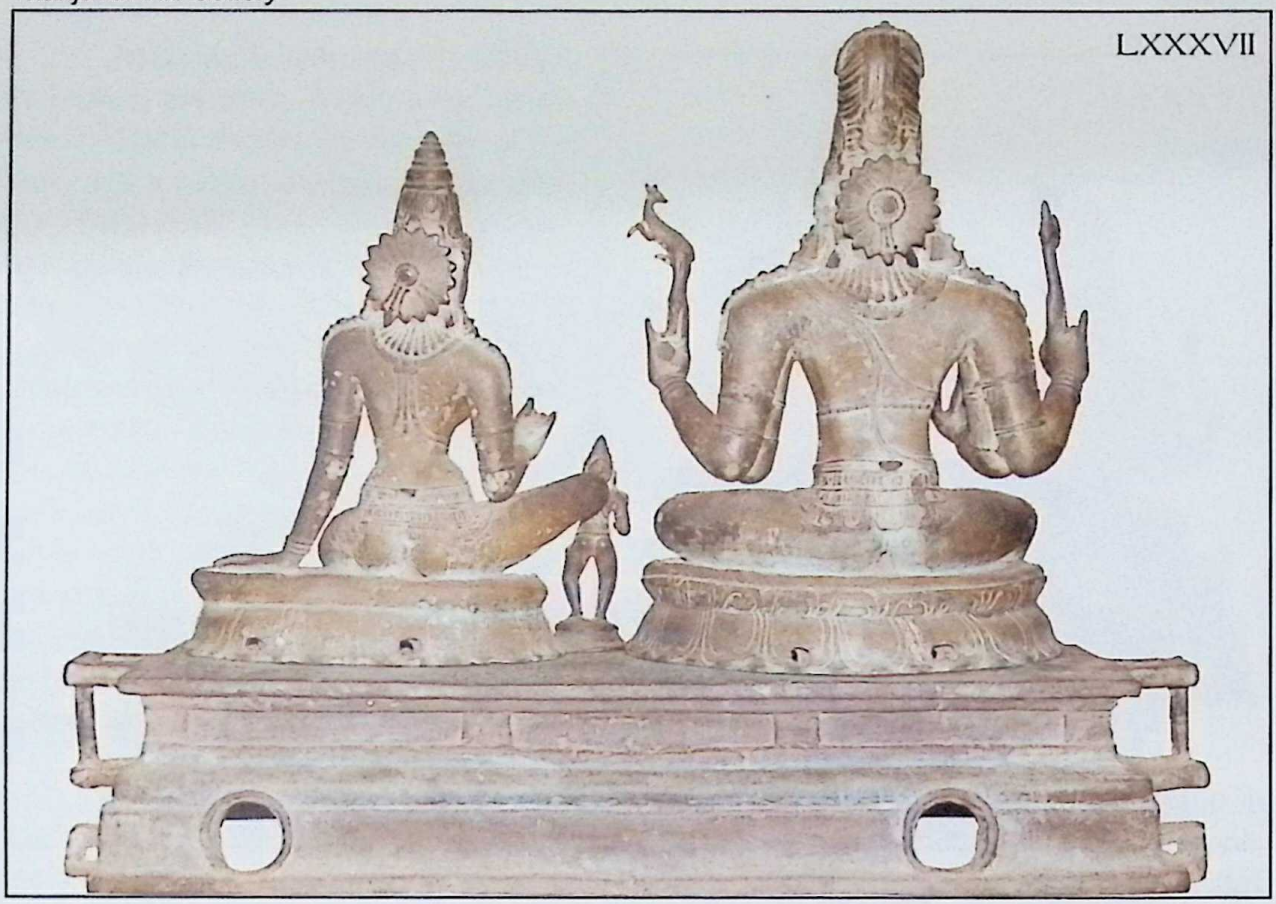

branch away and one passes vertically until it is caught in the waist zone. The *udarabandha* is thinner.

Devi is seated on his left in *lalitha* with right leg in *utkutika*, her right hand in *kataka* and left hand resting on the *padmapeedam*. *Channavira* passes in between the breasts instead of the *yajnopavita* observed in the set described earlier.

Skanda stands between his parents on a *padmapeedam* linked to his mother's *asana*. The two lotuses in his hand, conical *karandamakuta* on his head, *patrakundala* on his ears and waist girdle of jingling bells can be made out. With legs slightly bent the expression conveyed is alertness and desire to dance.

On stylistic grounds the images can be assigned to an early Chola period in its later phase. The *bhadrapeedam* bears the following Tamil inscription: வழுதையுடையான் சொக்கப்பிள்ளை. (The letter "க" retains an archaic form of the 14th-15th century). This inscription may indicate the establishment of ownership of a certain Sokkapillai of Vazudaiyur at a later date.

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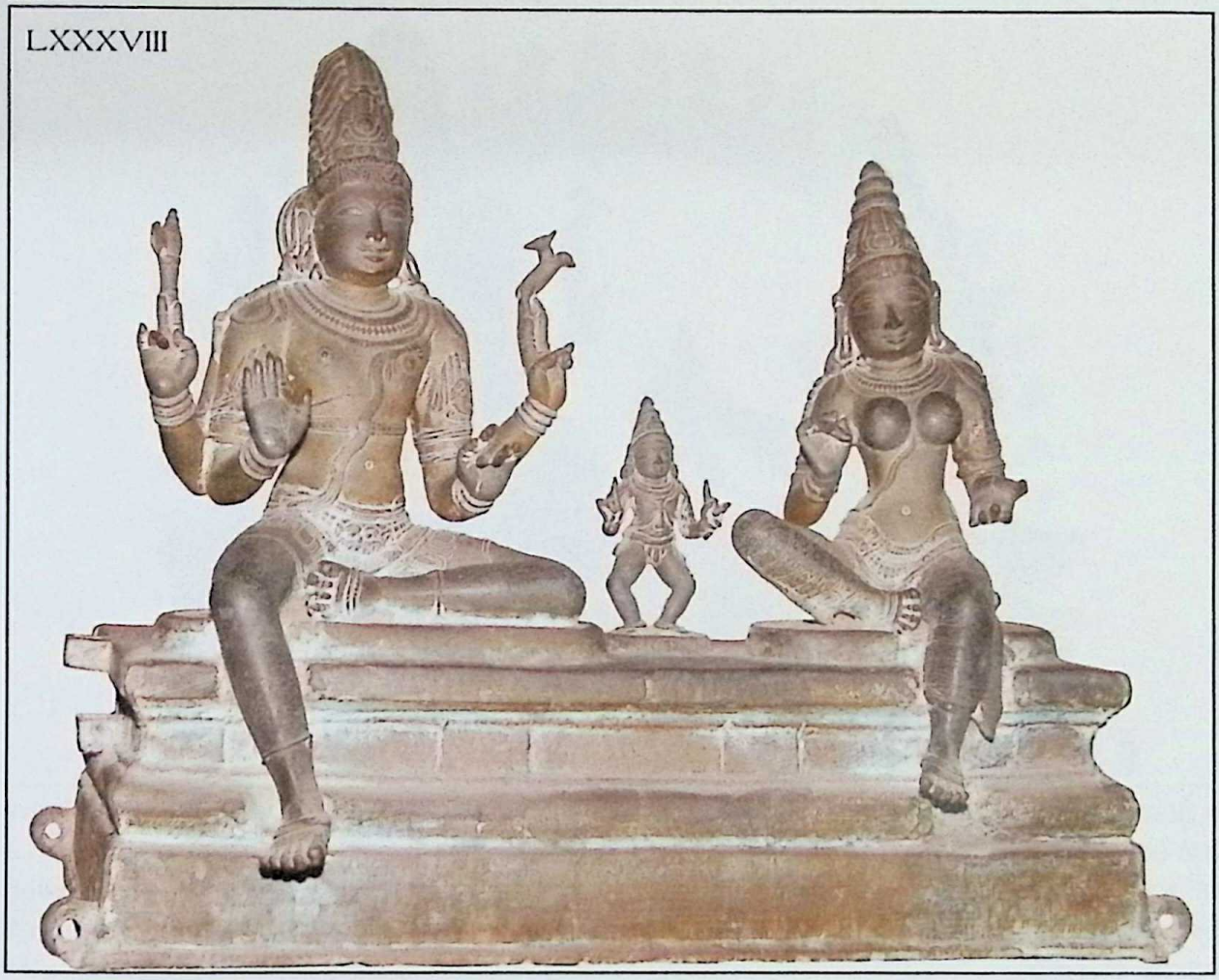
LXXXVIII



Cat. 35. SOMASKANDA GROUP-SIVA.

Mayuram Town - Mayuram Tk.
12th-13th Century A.D.

	Siva	Uma	Skanda
Ht. Total:	56 cm.	48 cm.	14 cm.
without Ped:	38 cm	30 cm.	12 cm.
Wt. Total:			45.400 Kg.
A.G. Br. No.			33

Siva, Uma (Parvati) and Skanda are seated on separate plates, which are fixed to a long rectangular *bhadrapeedam* in the usual iconographic set up and decorative features of

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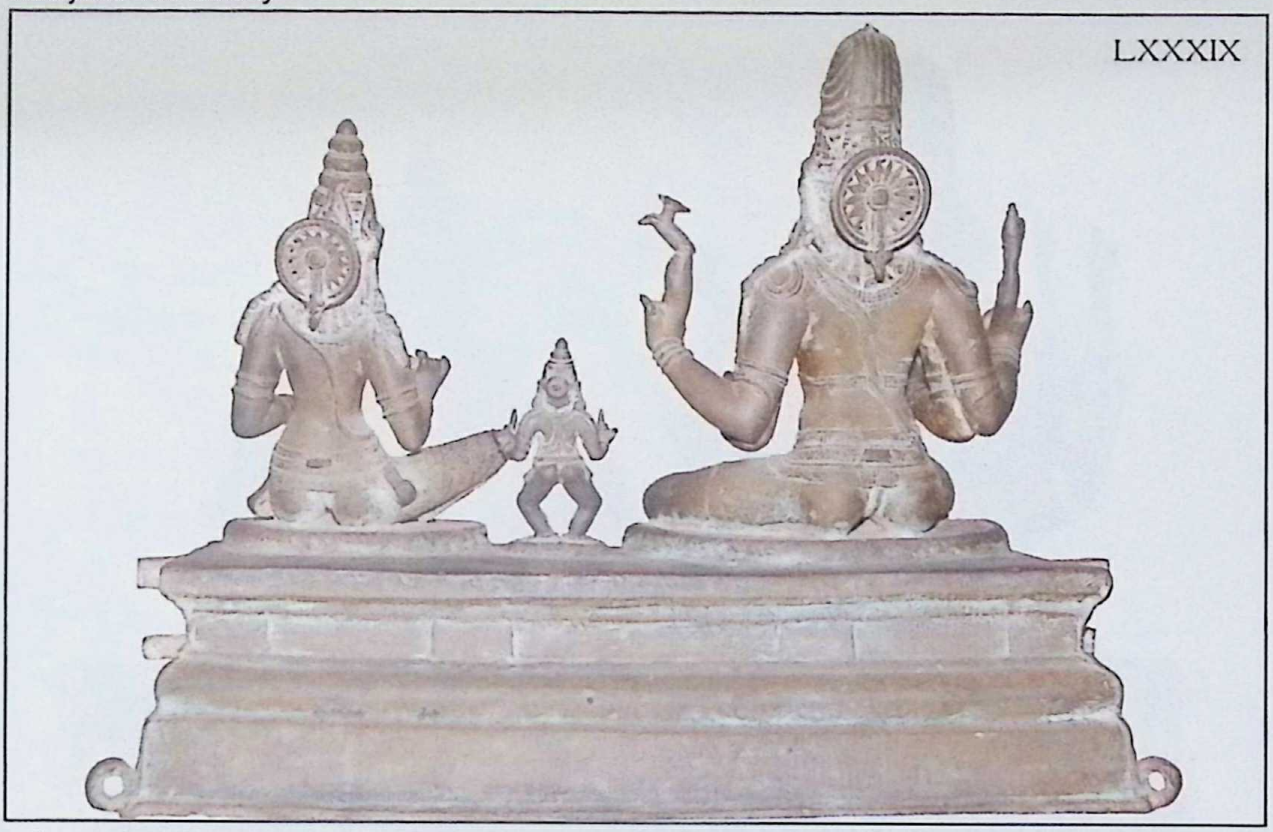

a Somaskandamurti. Flowing steamers on both shoulders, beside loop *tudis* on the shoulders are seen, which point to a late Chola period. The right leg hanging down is presented with a *bringipada.* Facial features of Siva are however of the best early Chola period, the expression being one of divine grandeur and beatitude in keeping with the spirit of assurance that the hands suggest.

Uma takes her seat on his left as usual with right leg in *utkutika* and left leg hanging down. A single streamer is on the right shoulder, while the left shoulder presents a *tudi* as a loop. A broad *yajnopavita*, three necklaces, undergarment going round the legs bearing circular brocade design with side folds, arabesque *angada*, group of three wristlets, *bahulamala* flowing over the shoulders and a row of seven locks of ringlets on the nape behind are some of the decorative features of the goddess.

Between Her and Siva child Subrahmanya dances with a lotus in each hand. The image is of poor workmanship with the full complement of *karandamakuta* with *siraschakra* behind, *Patrakundalas, channavira*, armlets, necklaces and *padasaras.* The poor workmanship of Subrahmanya idol, the relatively less attractive face of Uma and the existence of the double symmetical streamer on either shoulder would indicate a late Chola period.

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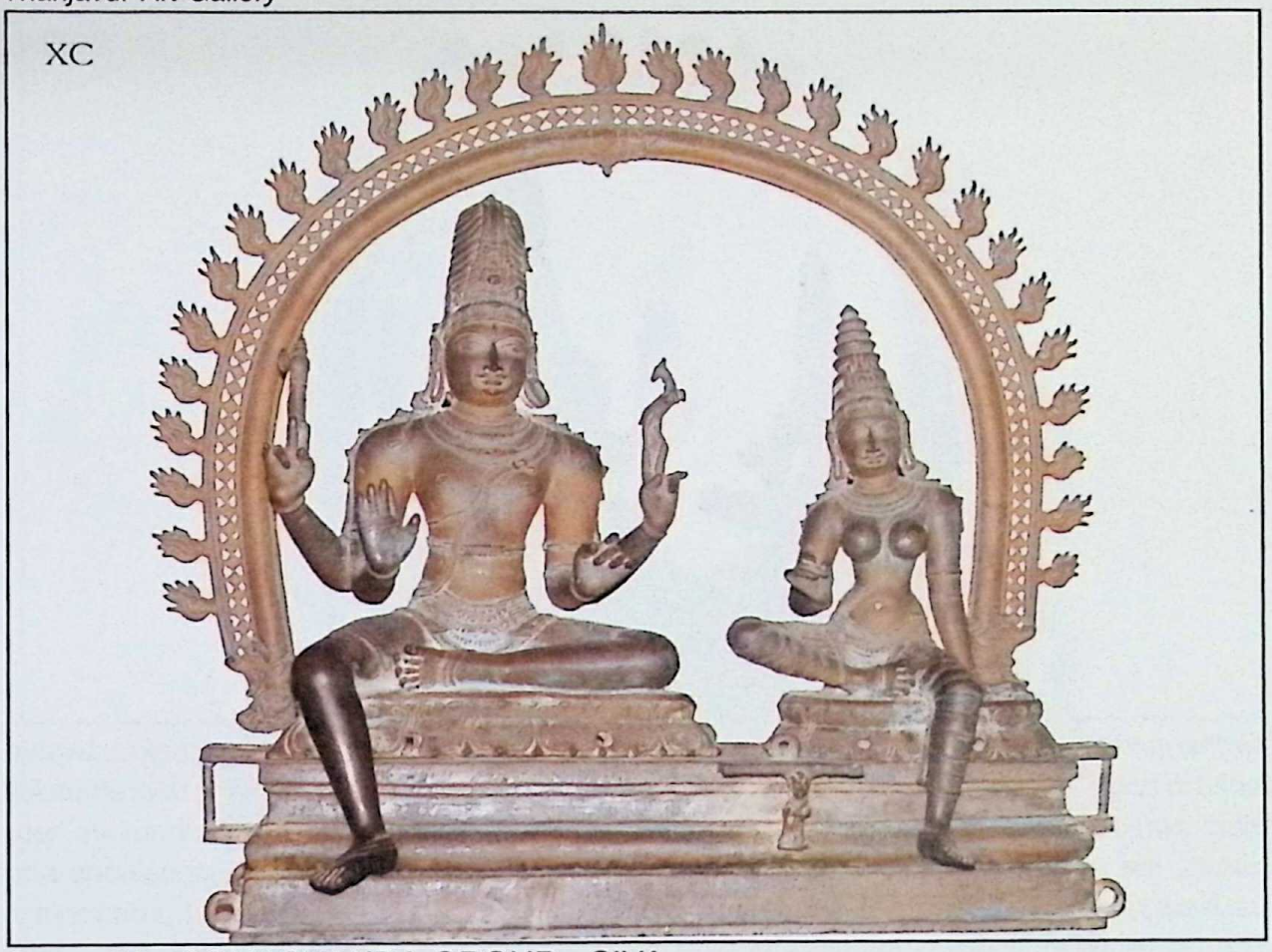

Cat. 36. SOMASKANDA GROUP - SIVA.

Pattiswaram - Kumbakonam Tk.
12th-13th Century A.D.

	Siva	Uma
Ht. total:	61 cm.	56 cm.
without Ped:	46 cm.	38 cm.
Wt:	36.800 Kg.	16.000 Kg.
Wt: Peedam including Tiruvachi	25.050 Kg.	
A.G. Br. No.	73	74

Both Siva and Uma are seated on separate realistic *padmapeedams* and both take their place on alarge *bhadrapeedam* provided with a *makara tiruvachi*, fitted with twenty nine tongues of flame. The god is in lalita and wears a plain shorts provided with a waist girdle of

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simhamukha clasp. A high *jatamakuta* showing *chandrakala* on the left, *siraschakra*, twelve locks in ringlets behind, two *rudrakantis*, a four-stranded *yajnopavita*, an ornate *udarabandha* plain armlets, wristlets, conventional *bahulamala*, bead streamlet on either shoulder, four hands, the upper with axe and antelope the lower in *abhaya* and *kataka* dispositions and *padasaras* are the decorative features of this God. The third eye is moulded prominently. The presence of a symmetric streamlets on both the shoulders indicates a very late Chola date.

The metal plank on which the Skanda of this set once rested (now empty) is seen projecting as a platform for him in the middle on the front side of the *bhadrapeedam.* This is supported by a rearing lion Two metal rings intended to secure Skanda to the *peedam* are also seen in this part. Skanda was not available in the collection.

Uma is seated on a *padmapeedam* with right leg in *utkutika.* Her right hand is in *kataka* and the left resting on the seat. Very high *karandamakuta* with *siraschakra* and locks of hair flowing behind, *makarakundalas* in the ears, four necklaces including *tali* string, a three-stranded *yajnopavita, bahulamala* stream let on each sholuder plain *angada, bajibandha,* wristlet, elaborate *padasaras* on the feet, a close fitting undergarment in wavy lines and girdle of loops and *makara* clasps with a pleat shown over the waist line behind are its decorative features. The *triveli* is marked on the abdomen. When compared to Siva, this Devi presents stylised work. Both may be assigned a very late Chola period.

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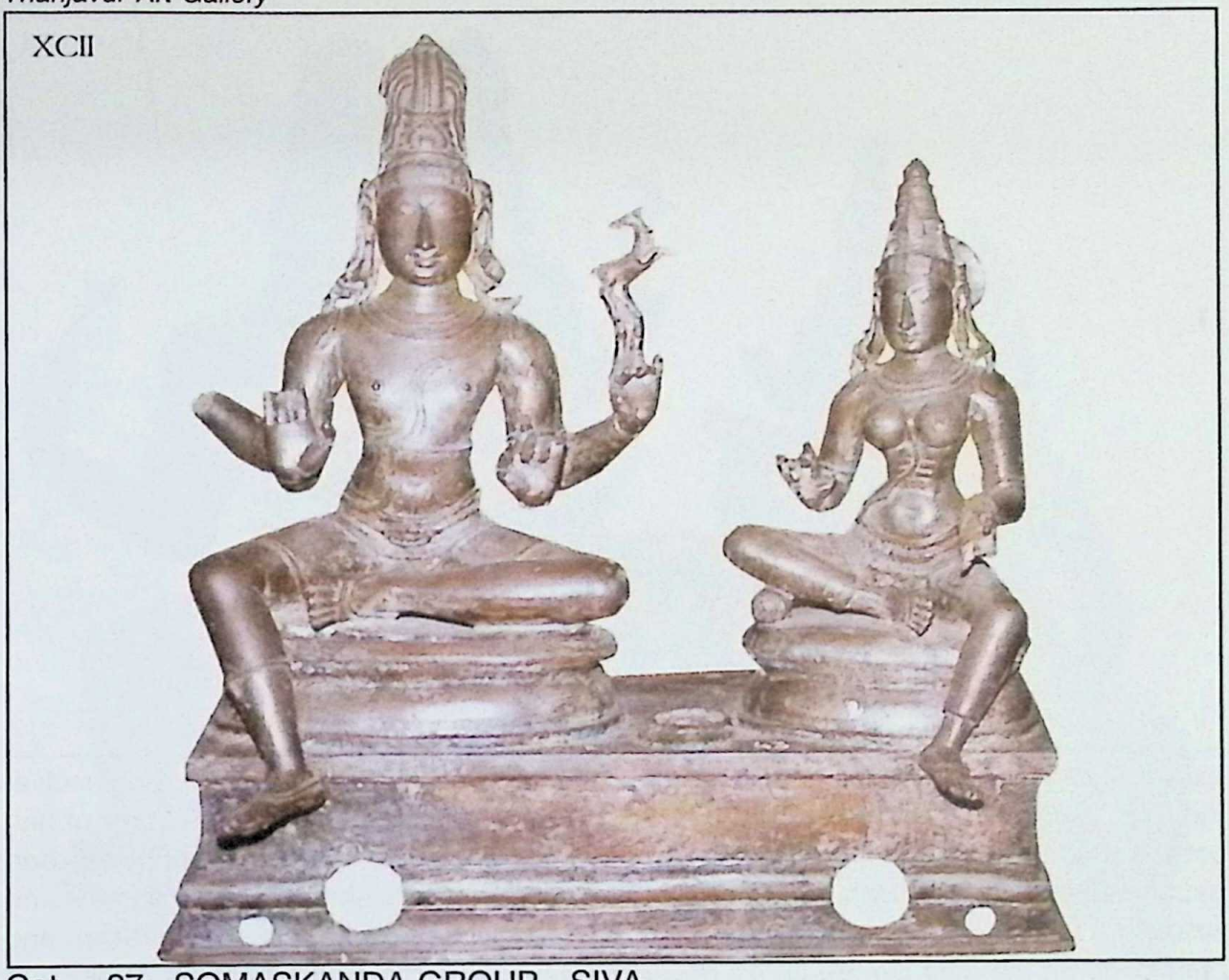
XCII



Cat. 37. SOMASKANDA GROUP - SIVA

Thiruvidaimarudur Temple-Kumbakonam Tk.
13th Century A.D.

	Siva	Uma
Ht. total:	64 cm.	53 cm.
without Ped: 43 cm.	33 cm.	
Wt:	25.100 Kg.	39.500 Kg.
	(Siva alone)	(Uma with Peedam)

A.G.Br. No.43

Siva is seated in lalita on a *padmapeedam* welded to the *bhadrapeedam* (now loose). The image's upper right hand is broken, lower right indicates *abhaya* and lower left is in

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XCIII

kataka. The upper left adjusts an antelope on its finger tips. The antelope is looking back at the God. A high *jatamakuta* with *chandrakala, siraschakra*, six ringlets of the locks of hair behind, two plain necklaces, two plain streamers, *makarakundala* in the right ear and *patrakundala* in the left ear supported by a flower design on the shoulder, plain armlets and wristlets, plain shorts with *simhamukha* clasp girdle, plain *udarabandha, padasaras* and *bringipada* on the right leg are Siva's decorative features. The figure presents rigidity and stylised work of very late Chola (13th Century A.D.)

Uma's right leg is supported by a pillow. Her right hand is in *kataka* and left hand in *varada.* A high *karandamakuta* with *siraschakra*, seven locks of hair behind, *makarakundalas* in both the ears, a streamer on each shoulder *yajnopavita* of single strand, *triveli* on the abdomen, two necklaces, plain armlet and wristlets and a close fitting undergarment with wavy lines and waist girdle of bead work with *makara* clasp are some of the decorative features of this stylised specimen of very late Chola work.

Skanda is missing in this set, However. a Skanda from the same source described earlier in Cat. No. 7 is mentioned in the Art Gallery records as forming part of this group. It has superior measurements at the base that do not fit in into the slot that is provided for Skanda in the *bhadrapeedam* of this group; hence that idol did not form part of this set.

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XCIV

Cat. 38. SOMASKANDA GROUP - SIVA

Tirukkalamputhu village - Nannilam Tk.
12th-13th Century A.D.

	Siva	Parvati	Skanda
Ht. Total:	51 cm.	39 cm.	23 cm.
without Ped:	41 cm.	30 cm.	15 cm.
Wt. Total:	43.250Kg	14.000 Kg.	1.500 Kg.
A.G.Br. No.	219	221	222

The entire Somaskanda set consisting of Siva, Parvati, and Skanda is a treasure trove find unearthed alone with other images in the above village in the year 1973. The

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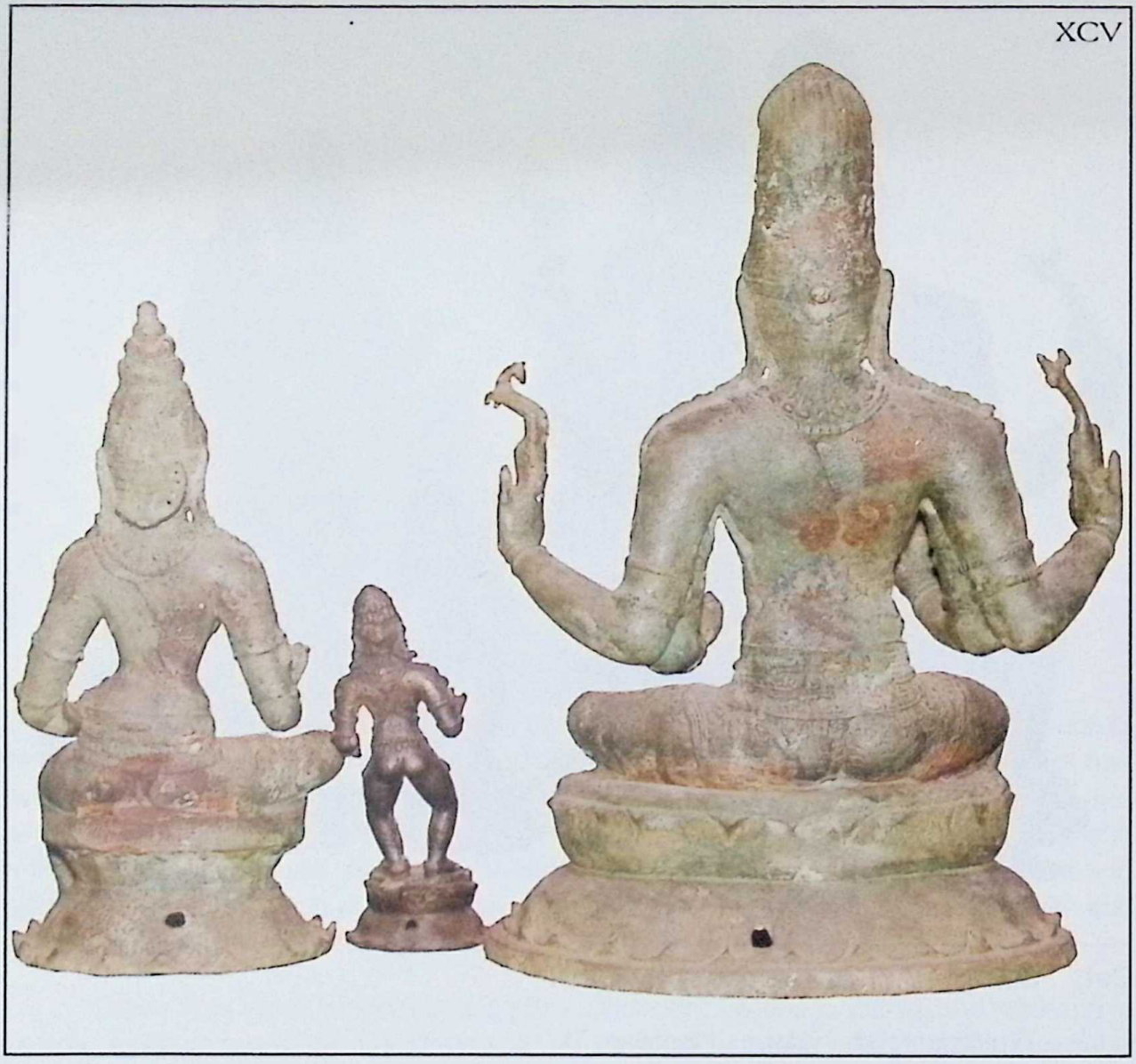

XCV

images have been found to be much eroded due to the action of earth, where they remained for hundreds of years. Siva and Parvati are seated on separate *padmasanas*, with holes. The boy Skanda, who is present in a dancing pose, is similarly provided with a small *padmapeedam* with holes for attachment to the *bhadrapeedam*. The combined *bhadrapeedam* was not available in the finds. Though the images are worn out, all the usual iconographic details can be noticed.

On stylistic grounds, the images have to be assigned to a very late Chola period.

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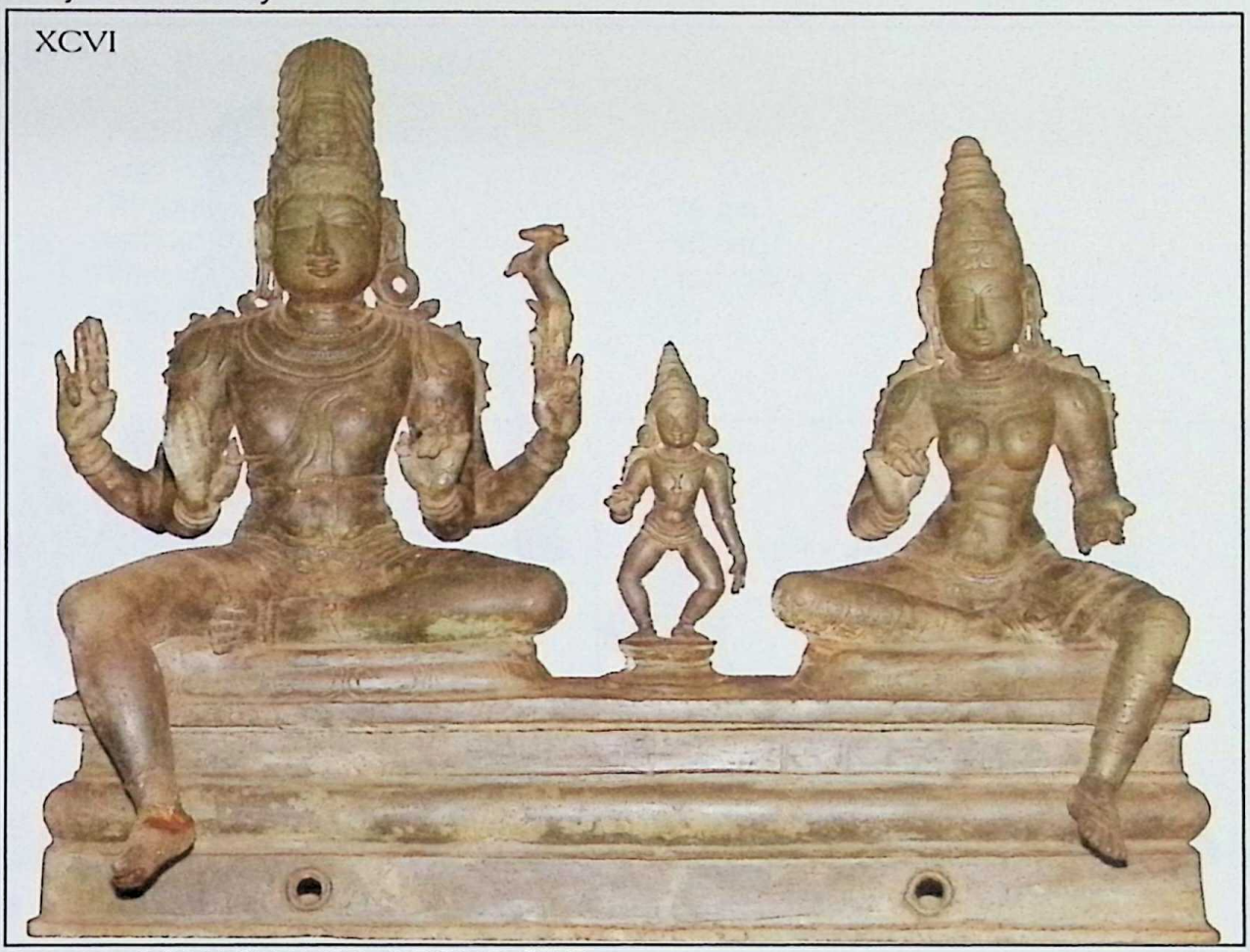
XCVI



Cat. 39. SOMASKANDA GROUP-SIVA.

Thanikottam Village-Tiruturaipoondi Tk.
13th-14th Century A.D.

	Siva	Parvati	Skanda
Ht. Total:	58 cm.	51 cm.	21.5 cm
without Ped:	43 cm.	36 cm.	20 cm.
Wt:			73.500 Kg.
A.G. Br. No.			228

This group of Siva, Parvati and Skanda was a treasure trove find unearthed in a channel in the above village along with nine other pieces, in the year 1973. The images of Siva and Parvati are seated on low *padmapeedam* which are fixed to a long rectangular *bhadrapeedam*. Skanda stands in a dancing pose, in the middle on a *padmapeedam* which

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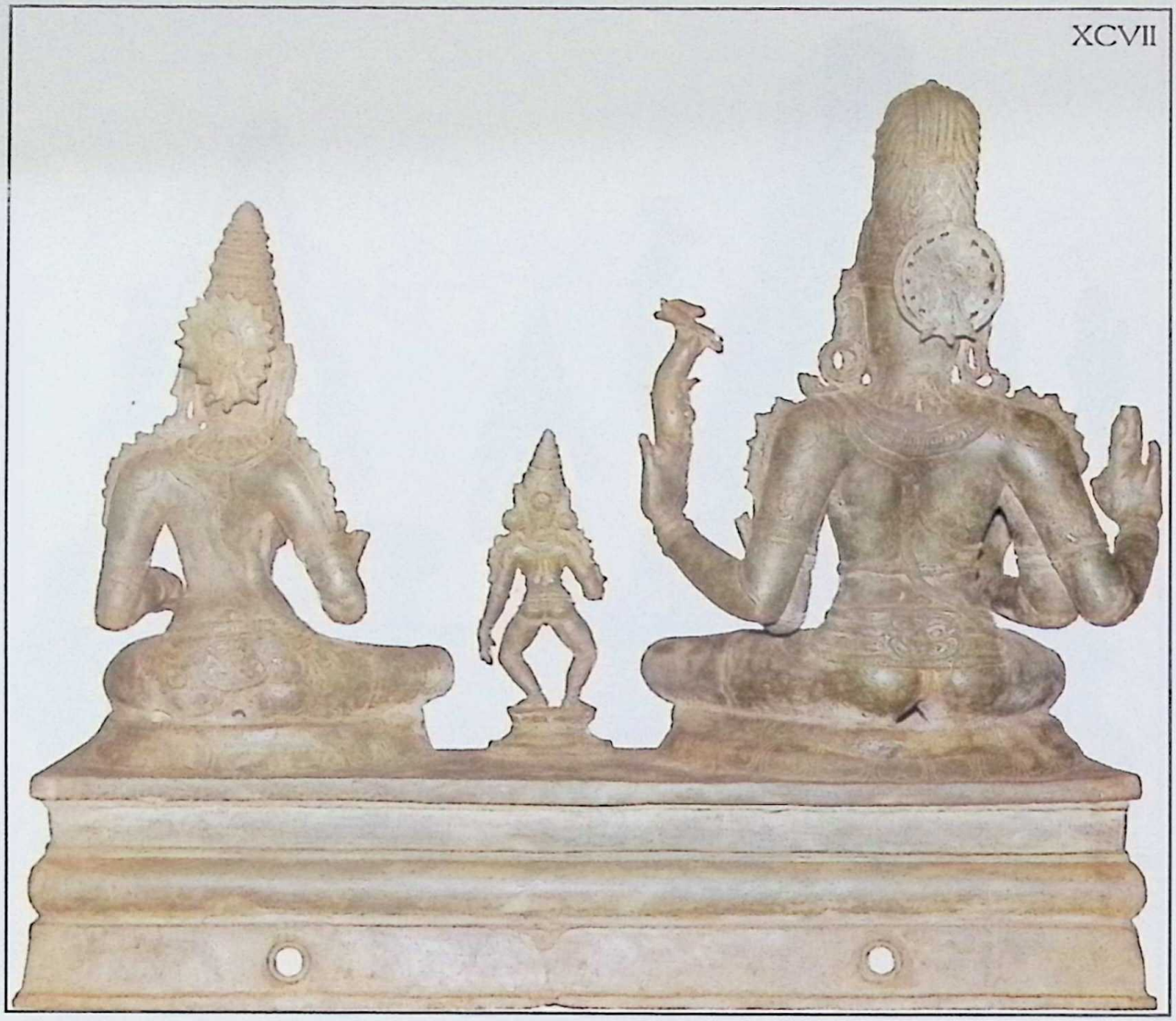

is also fixed to the *bhadrapeedam.*

The images present the usual iconographic set-up and decorative features of a Somaskandamurti. The right foot of Siva hanging down has been damaged due to earth's action. The toes and a portion of the foot are also broken.

The flowing streamers on both the shoulders at right angles to the prominent *bahulamalas*, and loop *tudis* are noticed. *Trivelis* are prominently marked in the form of depressions, but they are not elegantly placed on the abdomen. However, the torso and the facial features depict divine grandeur. The combined effect of the general features of the loop *tudi* and *triveli* would warrant a date in the post-Chola period.

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Cat. 40. SOMASKANDA-SIVA

Pattisvaram - Kumbakonam Tk.
15th - 16th Century A.D.

Ht. total :	74 cm.
without Ped:	58 cm.
Wt:	103.300 Kg.
A.G. Br. No.	31.

This is a very large image of Siva seated on a *padmapeedam* which has mortices suggesting its being secured to a lower *bhadrapeedam*. But the *bhadrapeedam*, was not available for collection by the Art Gallery.

XCVIII

The God is seated in *lalitha*, the right leg hanging down and the left tucked up on the seat. While both legs have *padasaras*, the right leg has an additional *bringipada*. He has four hands of which the two upper hands that held the axe and the antelope are unfortunately broken. The lower right hand indicates *abhaya*, with the little finger broken, The lower left is in *kataka*. The fore finger is also broken. A high *jatamakuta* on the head shows *chandrakala* on the left, while be hind is the elaborate *siraschakra* and a row of thirteen locks of hair in ringlets. As usual *makarakundala* adorns the right ear and *patra-kundala* the left ear. *Bahulamalas* flow gracefully on either shoulder, with a streamer on the right shoulder at right angles to it, and a *tudi* in loop on the left shoulder. The *nagavalaya angada*, is of

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elaborate design. *Bajibandha* and a group of three wristlets for the hands, five necklaces, *makarakanti*, *rudrakshamala, rudrakanti, kasumalai, karai, yajnopavita* of four strands, the fourth strand branching away to pass under the right armpit the strand being held together by a loose knot, and an ornate *udarabandha*, are some of the decorative features of the upper portion. Shorts cover the loins with a row of median loops, with pearl hangings and a belt of *simhamukha* clasp. The pleats of the loin cloth is indicated on the back as *kachcha.* An uncommon feature seen in this image is the *simhamukha* metallic ornament flanked by *makara* bows and attached to the girdle strings at the back below the *kachcha* pleat.

The third eye is indicated boldly on the forehead. The nose is pointed and the nipples are obsessed. The image is comparatively large, and could have been brought into existence in the booming days of Pattiswaram.

Considering its very large size it is doubtful whether this image of Siva was a part of a Somaskanda group with an equally large-sized Parvati and Skanda. This image of Siva could have been a Sukhasanamurti.

The stylistic features suggest Vijayanagar period.

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Cat. 41. SOMASKANDA - SIVA.

Thanjavur Dt.
Locality not known.
15 th - 16th Century A.D.
Ht. Total: 53 cm.
without Ped: 43 cm.
Wt: 39.55*0* Kg.
A.G. Br. No. 46.

Siva alone remains in this set while Skanda and Uma are missing.

The God is seated in *lalitha* on a *padmapeedam* with right leg hanging down and left leg resting on the seat presenting the decora-tive features of a Somaskanda Siva. Upper right hand, which is broken, held the axe. The very high *makuta,* sharp and pointed nose and stiff anatomical frame detract from its aesthetic quality. This image should be assigned to the early phase of the Vijayanagar period.

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Cat. 42. SUKHASANA MURTI - SIVA.

Keezayur - Nagappatinam Tk.
9th - 10th Century A.D.

Ht. total:	61 cm.
without Ped:	53 cm.
Wt:	62.200 Kg
A.G. Br. No.	96

This form of Siva appears to be more in the nature of a Sukhasana-murti (Siva sitting at ease). Than a Siva of a Somaskanda group. Similarly the Uma (Cat. No. 76) which was once grouped with this and called as Somaskanda Uma (Parvati) at the time of its receipt in the Gallery, is more likely a Bhogasakthi Amman. No combined *peedam* (supplementary base) or Skanda for these two figures were available in the collections of the Gallery. There are also marked differences in ornamental details and style between the two pieces.

The image is comparable to the seated Siva in the Somaskanda group from Tiruvalangadu now in the Madras Museum. Pallava features can be noticed still lingering in this image of early Chola date of the 9th - 10th Century A.D. The sitting pose on the *padmapeedam* is one of majesty with the right leg hanging down and the left leg tucked up.

The God has four arms with the lower in *abhaya-hasta* and the upper right hand holding an axe. As a particular feature of early style, this right upper hand may be seen in *Kataka-hasta* clearly grasping the handle of the axe in a most realistic manner, instead of the conventional *kartari-hasta* of the later periods. On the left, the deer is leaping from the two fingers of the upper hand, this time in the more usual *kartari-hasta.* The lower left hand in *kataka-hasta* might have once held a serpent as in *Vishapaharna Siva* of the Government Museum, Madras. Three wristlets for each hand, *bajibandha* and arabesque *angadas* mark the arms.

The excellant anatomy of the elongated torso wears three ordinary bead necklaces and a magnificent *karai* with a large central *muhappu* with three pendants hanging from it. The three-stranded *yajnopavita* has a broad central strand which ends in a loop modelled in high relief on the right thigh. A short *ardhoraka* with one schematic fold is worn tightly round the thigh. At the back, a large pleat securing the undergarment *kachcha* is realistically represented. These clothes are held in place by a jewelled belt with *kiriti-mukha*, bow clasp,

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and by a cloth sash whose bows and ends are seen fluttering at each side flowing down the right leg. Single *padasaras* with jewelled *mukappus* encircle the feet.

The long face, though somewhat rubbed when under worship still retains an expression of great beauty. The locks of hair are drawn back from a fillet on the forehead realistically piled in a high *jatamakuta* and held in place by a second fillet. It has the crescent moon, the *datura* flower and a skull naturally represented among its curls. An intricate *makarakundala* in the right ear and a simple *patrakundala* screwed into the left ear enhance the beauty of the face.

At the back, the head is provided with a *siraschakra* of diminitiva size. From the necklace hangs a thick thread or chain which ends in a more than usually large peepal shaped pendant.

On the back of the image, may be seen the remains of a serpent, whose head must once have risen over Siva's right shoulder. This and several other close similarities of iconography and style should be compared with a closely related image of Kalyanasundaramurti, at present under worship in the temple of Vadakkalathur village which is in the same area as Keezayur Temple, from which this image was obtained.

The image stands unique among the sculptures of the gallery. Its natural elegance, tall proportions and faithful realism of details must place it very early in the Chola period, not later than 9th Century or the early part of the 10th Century A.D.

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Cat. 43. SUKHASANA-SIVA.

Thanjavur Dt.
Locality not known.
15th-16th Century A.D.
Ht. Total: 43 cm.
without Ped: 30 cm.
Wt: 12.900 Kg.
A.G. Br. No. 68

CIII

Siva is seated in *lalitha* on a *padmapeedam* attached to a *bhadrapeedam* with the right leg dangling down. The image did not form part of a Somaskanda group. Siva has four hands, upper hands with axe and antelope (missing), lower right hand *abhaya* and lower left kataka. A high *jatamakuta* with the crescent moon and mermaid Ganga on it, *makarakundala* on the right ear, and *patrakundala* on the left ear, floral streamlet on the shoulders, *siraschakra,* behind, leaf-like ringlets meant to be hair below the *siraschakra.* three bead necklaces, *yajnopavita* with three strands, two branching away, an *udarabandha, nagavalaya,* and wristlets, beaded tudis on the shoulders, shorts with a *simhamukha* waist clasp, two anklets, and *padasaras* in addition to *bringipada* on the right leg are some of the decorative features. The third eye is visible on the forehead. With highly stylised decoration and pointed physical features, the image is a specimen of the conventional art of the 15th or 16th Century A.D.

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GLOSSARY

A

abhanga — Slight flexion of the figure. cat 2 etc.

abhaya — Assurance of protection. cat 6 etc.

abhaya hasta
abhayamudra — A gesture granting freedom from fear - fingers pointing upwards with hand raised palm forward. cat 5 etc.

anchita gana — A gana with graceful flexion. cat 28.

angada — An ornament tied round the upper arm by a string cat 12 etc.

anjali — A gesture of worship. cat 11 etc.

anjali mudra — A pose of anjali with the palm of the hands joined together near the chest. cat 11 etc.

ankusa — Elephant goad with a hook. cat 1.

apasmara — An ugly demon personifying ignorance and the bonds (malams) that fetter the soul from reaching God - usually seen under the foot of Nataraja and Dakshinamoorthi. cat 31 etc.

ardhoraka — Shorts cat 1 etc.

asana — A particular posture; alternatively, a kind of seat. cat 34.

B

bahulamala — Shoulder decoration of bahula flowers - an ornamental motif consisting of bahula or similar flowers. cat 9.

badrasana;
bhadrapeedam — Square or rectangular supplemental pedestal to which an image and its padmapeedam are attached and on which they rest.

bajibandha — An ornamental jewel worn just above the elbow, tied by strings. cat 5 etc.

brahmabandha — The knot of the strings of the yajnopavita usually over the left chest. cat 27 etc.

brahma Nandi — One of the many images of Nandi placed in the Siva temples. cat 11.

brahmotsavam — A Temple festival conducted for several days usually occurring in summer. cat 11.

bringipada — An ornament (with a string and bell attached) worn on the right leg (high up). cat 21 etc.

C

chandra — Moon.

chandrakala — Representation of the crescent moon. cat 36.

channavira — A gold ornament in the place of a yajnopavita, consisting of a middle strand passing down between the breasts and then bifurcating into two strands one on either side of the abdomen. cat 8 etc.

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chudamani — A golden ornament worn on the head dress in the middle and at the sides. cat 16 etc.

chutti — A small round ornament for the head dress worn by children. cat 14.

D

dhanapati — A donor cat 11.

datura — A thorn apple with strong narcotic properties; usually the flower is

datura flower — represented cat 12 etc.

dhyana — Meditation.

G

gana — A grotesque dwarf often shown as an attendent of Siva. cat 14 etc.

garbhagraha — Literally womb house; the dark sanctum of the temple housing the principal image of the temple. cat 11 etc.

gajjai — An ornament of very small gold or silver bells fastened by strings and worn on the waist or ankles. cat 7.

go-mani — A bell tied around the neck of a cow or bull. cat 10.

govala — The posture of the hand hanging down in the manner of the tail of a cow. cat 5 etc.

H

hamsa — The swan; the divine bird. cat 32.

J

jata — Matted locks of hair. cat 16 etc.

jatamakuta — An elaborate coiffure of jatas piled above the head to form a crown adorned with jewels or ornamentation. cat 11 etc.

K

kanti — A stiff necklace. cat 18 etc.

kanyadana — Sacred ceremony of giving away the bride in marriage. cat 16.

kapala — Literally human skull - used as begging bowl. cat 14

karai — A stiff necklace of large round gold beads strung on metal rather than thread. cat 18 etc.

kachcha — Cloth folded to form a pleat. cat 4 etc.

karandamakuta — A conical crown of hairstyle in tiers bulging in horizontal sections - the whole resembling a basket in shape; the tiers are called karandas. cat 1 etc.

kartari — A holding gesture cat 42

kartarimudra — The gesture of kartari. cat 42 etc.

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kataka	A pose of holding between the closed fingers. cat 6 etc.
katakahasta	The pose of hand in kataka. cat 42 etc.
katyavalampita	A gesture of the hand in which it is shown resting on the waist. cat 17 etc.
kesabandha	Hair-style with a binding of flowers or fillets. cat 7 etc.
keyura	An armlet similar to bajibandha but made of stiff rings. cat 24 etc.
kinkini	Bells or tinklers on a thread. cat 7 etc.
kirita	Crown.
kiritamakuta	A type of tall crown of metal. cat 5 etc.
kiritimukha	A face of glory; a motif consisting of leonine head with bulging eyes and a flat nose, seen in the centre of belts prabhavali and arches. cat 13 etc.
kolusu	A wristlet or anklet of woven pattern. cat 5 etc.
ku chabandha	A breast band. cat 9 etc.
kunchita	A graceful bend or tilt. cat 31.
kundala	An ear ring. cat 6 etc.
L	
lalitha	Graceful form. cat 33 etc.
M	
madyasthayee	First string sarini producing a middle note on the veena instrument. cat 31 etc.
mahamandapam	The inner hall in the temple.
makara	An ornamental motif developed from an alligator or a crocodile head with floriated tail. cat 13 etc.
makaraclasp	A clasp with the motif of a makara. cat 16 etc.
makara-chudamani	A golden ornament worn in the centre of the head dress with the makara motif below. cat 16.
makarakanti	A stiff necklace with the makara motif. cat 40.
makarakundala makarakuntala	Ear ornament with a makara motif. cat 33.
mangamalai	A necklace with a motif of mangoes. cat 18.
mauna	Silence. cat 32.
mukappu	The frontal motif of any ornament. cat 13 etc.
makuta	Crown cat. 41.
muyalaka	The demon under the foot of Nataraja see also apasmara. cat 28 etc.
N	
nabhi	Navel. cat 4 etc.
naga	A serpent. cat 32.

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naga angada	An angada with the motif of snakes. cat 15.
naga valaya	Wristlet with a frieze of nagas. cat 19 etc.
naga yajnasutra	Snakes twisted to form the sacred thread or yajnopavita
nilotpalam	A long tubular flower. cat 9.
P	
padakkam	A pendant in laid with jewels. cat 8.
padasara	An ornament worn below the ankle designed to lie loose on the foot. cat 1 etc.
padukai	Wooden sandal. cat 32.
padma	A lotus.
padmasana	A sitting posture with legs crossed and feet resting on the thighs; alternatively, the lotus shaped seat or pedestal; also padmapeedam. cat 38.
padmapeedam	A pedestal with a motif in the form of an inverted lotus. cat 1 etc.
panigrahana	The ceremony of giving a bride away in marriage. cat 16
parasu	An axe. cat 26.
parivaradeity	Tutelary deity.
pasa	A small noose. cat 1.
patli	Close fitting bangles often formed by one or more continuous spiral. cat 16 etc.
patrakundala	An ear ornament in the form of a (leaf) scroll inserted in the ear lobe. cat 6 etc.
pitambaram	Flowing silk garment. cat 16.
pita; pith peedam	A horizontal slab or pedestal over which an image is seated. cat 24 etc.
pottu	A circular mark on the fore-head. cat 24 etc.
prabhai prabhavali	A halo; an arch with tongues of flame attached to it (see also tiruvachi). cat 17 etc.
pravala	Necklace of mixed gems. cat 13.
prathamagana	The chief gana. cat 32.
R	
rasikala	Appreciation. cat 16.
rudraksha	A berry sacred to Siva. Eleo carpus Ganitrus. cat 11.
rudrakshamala	A necklace or garland of rudraksha corals. cat 13 etc.
rudrakanti	A stiff necklace of rudraksha corals etc. or an ornamental motif similar to rudraksha berries. cat 14 etc.

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S

sakti saktivel	A spear; also synonymous of power and energy. cat 5 etc.
samabhanga	A posture in which the figure is shown without flexions of the body, see also abhanga, tribanga. cat 1 etc.
sangam age	The classical age of the Tamil Nadu prior to Christian era.
sandya	Evening.
sankha	conch. cat 16.
sarbamudra	A pose like a hooded serpent. cat 31.
sarini	One of the strings of the vina instrument. cat 31 etc.
simha	Lion
simhamuka	Lion faced. cat 11 etc.
simhasana	A seating with a lion's face.
simhamukha clasp.	A clasp with simhamukha. cat 36 etc.
siraschakra	A circular ornament provided behind the head designed like a wheel or lotus (for attachment of flower garlands) cat 1 etc.
srivatsa	An auspicious sign of varying design representing Sridevi often decorating the chest of Vishnu.
skandamala	Ornament or streamer of the tassels (of strings, beads etc) shown at right angles on the shoulders. cat 3 etc.
sulam	A trident see also trisulam.
suryakala	A motif of sun. cat 21.

T

tandavakaranas	Dance poses - General information Vinayaga.
tilaka	A circular mark on the forehead. cat 9.
tribhanga	A posture in which the body is flexed thrice. See also samabhanga. cat 5 etc.
tiru; thali	A marriage token worn at the throat. cat 5 etc.
tiruvachi	See prabavali. cat 24 etc.
triveli	The three folds on the abdomen of a woman considered a mark of loveliness and grace. cat 5 etc.
tudi mani tudis	A streamer or loop shown at right angles on the shoulder (see also skandamala); mani-tudi one of small beads. cat 11 etc.

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U

udarabandha	An ornamental belt worn around the stomach. cat 1 etc.
upavita	A sacred thread worn across the left shoulder and under the right arm, see also yajnopavita.
ushnisha	Literally turban; generally applied to the cranial protruberance on the head of Bhddha. cat 13etc.
utkutika	A pose of the leg tucked up on the seat. cat 33 etc.
uttariya	A shawl-like garment worn across the upper part of the body; upper garment; an upper cloth. cat 4.

V

vajra	A thunder-bolt weapon represented with double trident joined together. Associated with Indra. cat 5 etc
vajrayudha	Vajra instrument. cat. 6.
vahana	A vehicle; generally applied to animal mount of various deities. cat 6.
valayal	A simple wristlet
valamsuli	The proboscis of Ganesa turned right instead of the left. General information Vinayaga.
vanki	A stiff decorated ornament worn on the upper arm.
varada	A gesture bestowing boon. cat 19etc.
varadahasta	A hand lowered. palm forward, fingers pointing downwards. cat 5 etc.
vatuka	Boy. cat 15.
vel	A single edged spear. cat 6.
ventalai	A human skull. cat 14.
vina	A lute; a stringed instrument. cat 31 etc.
vina-danda	The hollow shaft of the vina instrument. cat 31.
virakkazal	An ornament worn in token of heroic deeds, usually worn high up on the ankle. cat 5 etc.
visvapadma	Inverted lotus. cat 5.
vyasa	The great seer who edited the Vedas. General information Vinayaga.

Y

yajnopavita	The sacred thread as upavita. cat 1 etc.

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APPENDIX I

Extracts from "OUTLINES OF SAIVISM"
By Thiru M. ARUNACHALAM.
Gandhi Vidyalayam, Tiruchitrambalam Mayuram.

ANTIQUITY OF SAIVISM

Saivism one of the oldest religions of the world, older than even what is now called Hinduism, Hinduism, if we look at the derivative meaning of the word, is no definite religion at all. The river Indus (Sindhu) marked the western boundary of the ancient country, Bharata varsha invaders entering this land from the west through the Khyber pass, called this country the land beyond the Indus, India; the people beyond the river Sindhu were the Sindhus or Hindus, and their religion Hinduism. The people in this vast sub-continent at one time in the remote past were Tamils and they had a religion which probably then had no name; because there was no need to specify it by a name. Long after the admixture of Sanskrit in the language and the Vedic cult in the culture of the people, the necessity to denominate it arose; God, the Absolute, the one, came to be called Siva, and the religion was called Saivism. The point worth emphasizing is that the religion was there; its principles and philosophy were, there, its concept of God was there; only the name was given later. The relics excavated at Mohenjadaro and Harappa point to a civilisation millennia before Christ some where the figure of modern Siva is seen and Siva worship inferred. All these point to the great antiquity of the Saiva religion.

When the Tamil literary convention classifed geographical regions as kurinji(hills), mullai (forest), marudam (plains), neidal (coast and palai (desert) and fixed their deities, no mention is made of Siva, while the other deities such as Muruha, Vishnu, Indra, Varuna and Kotravai are mentioned. This was obviously because Siva was held supreme and considered as the deity for all the regions, and so no one region was set apart from Him, Siva is found referred to as He under the fiscutree, the blue-throated One, the One who is half woman, He with the bull banner, He with the matted locks, He with the bull mount, He with the crescent moon, the three eyed One, He who destroyed the three forts and the like.

2. SAIVA SCRIPTURES

Literature from the very ancient times in the Tamil country has been predominantly religious and the major part of it was influenced by Siva worship. The goal of all human endeavour in India in general had been set as the four - living a righteous life, securing worldly goods, enjoying the pleasures of life and finally securing liberation from all bonds which bind man to matter and obscure his higher vision. Such had been the aim also of education from the very ancient past. No wonder therefore that all literature has had a religious vein running through it.

The Tamil people are in a sense in distinctly different position from the people of the other languages in this, that they have a vast body of religious and philosophical literature, not only in Sanskrit, but in their own language, from an early period. Saiva philosophical literature in Tamil dates back to at least the fifth century A.D. and that itself reflects thought that had been current in the land in the Tamil language probably for more than a thousand years earlier.

Saivism of the Tamilnad was not founded by any prophet or seer. It is as old as Man himself. The Truth was revealed to him by Siva and he had handed it down to posterity. Hence the Saiva religion takes its name from the all-knowing Siva himself and not from any human prophet or acharya. The Sanskrit Vedas are sufficiently known and they do not require here any description. We shall be content to say that the concluding part of the Vedas, viz, the Upanishads, are the important part, as they deal with matters relating to the spirit. The matter dealt with in the Upanishads also varies with the context of their utterance, their approach and the peculiar problem which each upanishad handles.

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Among the Upanishads, the thoughts in the Svetasvatara upanishad approximate to the Saiva siddhanta system of philosophy. This system does not accept the authority of the smritis Instead, it holds the Saiva Agama as having equal authority with the Vedas, the principal Saiva Agamas are twenty eight in number. Like the four Vedas, the Saiva Agamas had been revealed by Siva to enlightened seers of the past and have been handed down by them through the centuries by word of mouth. There are, besides the secondary agama (Upagamas) numbering 207. A few of the agamas have been printed, sometimes with Tamil Translation also, but the majority of them have not yet seen the light of print. Several centuries back some learned Sivacharyas had written commentaries on some of the agamas, explaining their meaning, scope and application. The Saivas consider the Vedas to be a general scripture for all branches of the vaidika religion, which now goes by the name of Hinduism, and the Agamas to be a special scripture for the Saiva Siddhantin.

This system of philosophy is also called the Agamanta (perhaps to distinguish it from some other systems which call themselves Vedanta); nonetheless it is also Vedanta, in the sense that it accepts the Upanishadic (Vedanta) doctrines and interprets them in its own way. Each agama consists of four parts, each complete in itself. The first is the vidyapada, dealing with the three entities, God, soul and matter, and the efforts of the soul to liberate itself from the bonds and attain inseparable union with Siva. The kriya pada deals with personal worship, and congregational temple worship, festivals in temples, installation and the like subjects, this part is the basis for all sculpture, architechture and dance in our country. In this sense, the agamas may be said to have made the greatest and most significant contribution to the art and culture of the people of India; it is at the same time strange that a religic is treatise has made this contribution. The other two parts are the yoga pada, dealing with the ashtanga yoga and the other yogas and similar sunjects, and the charya pada, dealing with the daily religious observances and austerities to be practised by a Saiva.

Many of the subjects dealt with in the agamas had been expanded into separate treatises in Sanskrit by Sivacharyas from about the tenth century. The Ashta prakaranas, eight philosophical treatises, mostly deal with the philosophy, and the Paddhatis, traditionally eighteen deal with the ritual part of the kriya pada.

Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva wrote different commentaries on the Brahma Sutras and they had given rise to different schools of Vedantic thought as Advaita, Visishtadvaita and Dvaita respectively. Srikantha (also called Nilakantha) Sivacharya wrote a Saiva commentary on the Brahma Sutras which the Saivas adopt with certain reservations. The Saivas claim their religion was not established by any individual acharya like the above schools of Vedanta. Saiva Siddhanta is also a School of Vedanta and it used to call itself Suddha advaita to distinguish itself from the other three. Scholars are of the opinion that the Brahma Sutras differ in their philosophic concepts from the Upanishads themselves.

Saivas accept these two - the Upanishads and Brahma Sutras also as their scriptures, but they do not accept the Bhagavat Gita which is accepted by all the others.

Puranas and Itihasas have religious currency in all branches of Hinduism. Of the 18 puranas, ten are Saiva puranas. Some of them have been done into Tamil verse some centuries ago, and they are part of the long line and the rich heritage of Tamil literature. Particular mention may be made of the Suta Samhita which is part of the Skanda purana. Tradition has it that Sankara read it eighteen times before he wrote his Brahma Sutra bhashya; this will illustrate the great importance attached to this purana. The number of important Tamil puranas which elucidate some aspects of Siva dharma and Siva punnya legends is legion. It is not possible even to mention them here. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are no doubt national epics for the whole of India. But viewed from the religious angle, the ithihasas or epics for the Saivas are the Siva mahapurana, the Siva rahasya and the Skanda purana.

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APPENDIX II

"AN YEAR OF PROGRESS" an article written by: THIRU.T.K. PALANIAPPAN, I.A.S., in the Souvenir published on the occasion of the Art's Festival on Monday the 13th April 1953.

Chola Desa has more temples in it than any other tract of land of comparable area in South India. It is part of the traditions of this great land that every branch of human activity centered round its temples. Apart from being places of worship, these temples have all along served as nureseries of fine arts, such as, music, dance, sculpture and painting. These fine arts found their highest expression in the South Indian Temples, Being assured of the ordinary necessaries of life as part of the establishment of the temple the artist of those days had no other ambition in life than to serve at the feet of the Goddess of Art. In their loving devotion to her they poured into stone, metal, wood and canvas all that is best in human nature and imagination creating masterpieces of beauty grand in proportions and concept to the delight of the divine and the wonder and joy of man. This was their highest form of worship to God and of service to man.

Of all the cities in the Chola country, Tanjore, the capital of the later Cholas and of the Naiks and the Maharattas who succeeded them, has been the treasure house of art for centuries. It has always conjured up visions of the celestial in the minds of art lovers and tourists. They come to this ancient and historic city from far and near, fondly hoping to have a feast for the eye and the intellect. On reaching this city they feel sadly disappointed on seeing nothing of the shadow of the glorious past but only a medly of incongruous buildings fast tumbling down affording the literate vandal a canvas for his mural scribblings.

During the medieval period the destructive hands of the fanatical foreign invaders fell on these temples and places more than on any other thing. Plucked out of their settings by rough and crude hands, the images of desecrated temples now lie on the sides of roads, canals and tanks dumbly proclaiming the sad tale of their desecration. Some of the bronzes not useful for worship are found stored in lumber rooms clothed with cobwebs and verdigris and some of the stones in the outer walks of temples where, exposed to the vagaries of weather, they are fast wearing away. Even after years of neglect and mutilation. Some of them are still valuable as works of art. These will be lost to the nation, if they are not collected and preserved for the benefit of the public and art lovers. Even a civil servant like myself, who is lost in the daily routine of humdrum life and finds very little time for other interests or activities, much less for fine art, could not escape being attracted by these disturbed and neglected pieces of art and could not resist their mute entreaties for better treatment and for being given an opportunity to entertain the art lover and to serve the people of Independent India. I was distressed to hear that several pedlars in artware were and still are, by all methods which human ingenuity could devise acquiring and selling valuable pieces of bronze and even stone for fabulous prices to the rich to adorn their drawing halls. It is sad to reflect that much mischief had already been done and several valuable pieces had been spirited away not only to the bigger cities in this land but also to lands beyond the seas.

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While the sad plight of these desecrated and neglected images was still engaging my thoughts, a trivial incident supplied the necessary stimulus for action. An archaeologist from Calcutta, who casually spotted an image of Brahma standing neglected on the riverside of karunthattankudi, a suburb of Tanjore, applied to me that it might be acquired for being transported to Calcutta. When his attention was focussed on this image, the local public took alarm and while protesting against its removal outside the district, they were agreeable to its being preserved in some place within the district itself against savages of nature and vandals. Reflecting further on this matter I felt that the time has come to collect all such mutilated and neglected pieces of art in stone and bronze and house them in a safe place in the palace at Tanjore in order to protect and preserve the remnants of our artistic inheritance from the ravages of time and the hands alike of the inreverent vandal and the unscrupulous pedlar in art-ware. The image of the Lord of creation was therefore removed from the riverside to the vacant corridors in the Saraswathi Mahal square in the Tanjore Palace. Thus, the Lord of creation became the creator of the Art Gallery as well by Himself constituting its nucleus and starting point. Soon after, a committee of art lovers in the city was constituted and an attempt was made to collect all pieces found scattered on the side of roads, canals and river banks. The authorities of some of the temples, mutts and the Senior Prince of Tanjore sent similar unused pieces of art that were lying in the outer walks, tank bunds and lumber rooms of temples and mutts. The stately halls and the corridors opposite to the Saraswathi Mahal, where the Naik Kings had held their brilliant durbars until the end of the 17th century, presented a pitiful picture without even good flooring. They were repaired and colour washed and an Art Gallery was started with the collections till then made. It was inaugurated on the 9th December 1951 by Sri M. Bakthavatsalam, the then Minister for P.W.D., Government of Madras under the Presidentship of Sri.P.S. Kumaraswami Raja, the then Chief Minister. With the generous donations so kindly made by the three Matathipathis and by the Municipal Council, Tanjore, a watchman cum guide was appointed to look after the museum.

Ever since its opening, this Art Gallery has been attracting a steady stream of visitors. It is one of the places of interest to sight-seers from outside the district and to foreign tourists. It was then felt that some of collections initially made were not of a very high order. Efforts were therefore continued to replace the second rate specimens as and when better specimens became available. By now, most of the second rate specimens have been eliminated and the Art Gallery has got a fairly good and representative, though still a modest collection of exhibits. Consequent on this process of replacement, the need arose for rearranging the exhibits so as to present them in a more rational, attractive and artistic manner and this has been done recently. Disfigurement of the nose of the images appears to have been the chief delight of the depraved vandal. Most of our stone collections had been so disfigured. These and some of the badly broken bronzes have been got repaired by experts to the minimum extent necessary without materially affecting their antiquity.

Some of the images which were in imminent danger of being buried and broken by the falling mantapams in which they were housed or by the destructive hands of the irreverent vandal have been transferred by the Senior Prince to the stately halls of the Art Gallery where they remain enthroned in regal splendour. It is indeed a pity that numerous such pieces are still allowed to remain in

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incarceration unseen, unused, unenjoyed and unhonoured except by bats and rats, and that many mutilted stone images are still kept pell mell in the outer walks of dilapidated and ill kept temples exposed to the severities of weather. They could certainly be put to better use for the entertainment and education of the people.

The north-western corner of the palace building adjacent to the Naik Durbar Hall which had fallen down years ago presented a very unsightly appearance and marred the beauty of the quadrangle in front of the Art Gallery. The quadrangle being ideally situated was made the venue of cultural meetings. When such meetings were held, it was found that the spoken voice travelled to the farthest corner of the square without the use of microphone or loud speaker. Then the idea was conceived of using this place as an Open Air Theatre by converting the fallen high level corner into a stage and the quadrangle in front of it as an auditorium where without any expenditure on furniture and microphone, cultural meetings, music, dance and dramatic performances could be organised for the benefit of the public. In pursuance of this idea, the adjacent portion of southern hall have been extended and improved so as to make up a semi-circular gallery. The stage has been so designed as to conceal the broken walls and ugly patches and to merge harmoniously with the architectural style of the surroundings and to be within the line of vision from every point of the amphitheatre which can comfortably seat about 2,000 persons on the floor. The high walls on the four sides act as a sort of megaphone and the melody and voices from the stage reach the farthest end without loss of volume.

I had always been feeling sad that the Sangeetha Mahal which once resounded to the melody of the Carnatic musicians and the rhythmic foot falls of nimble dancers was being used as a godown and an office, the clattering noise of the typewriters and the squeaking noise of mice and sdcuirrels supplying the only melody. This magnificient hall was built probably in the time of Sevappa Naik in the early part of the 16th century. It is glorified as "A THEATRE ADORNED WITH GEMS OF ALL SORTS" in the Reghunatha abyudayam a drama by Vijayaragnava Naik on the life of his illustrious ancestor Reghunatha - a hall known for its excellent acoustic properties. The hall which even today stands as a marvel of the engineering feat of our ancestors - certainly deserved to be put to better use than as a godown and an office. An effort was made by my predecessor in office, Sri T.K. Sankaravadivelu, I.A.S. to focus public attention and interest on the excellence of this hall for purposes of holding performances. By demonstrating the acoustic properties of this hall to high personages who visited the town, he finally succeeded in persuading the Government to order the removal of the offices and the godown from the Mahal and its retention as a hall of music and meetings. In the dramatic work mentioned above this Sangeetha Mahal has been referred to as Natya Mantapam and is claimed to have been built in a cave like form and agreeably to the dimensions and proportions found in the Natya Sastra to secure maximum resonance and minmium echo. To achieve this twin object, a number of devices appear to have been incorporated in the building which are now not traceable on account of the alteraticns made in the building in later times. Even now maximum resonance is maintained when the music is in the low register and is perfectly audible at the farthest corners of the ground floor and the balcony. It was indeed a surprise to me that such an excellent

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auditorium should have remained unexploited so long in Tanjore, the great city of Carnatic music and Barathanatyam. I realised that there was the main reason why musicians and music lovers were not attracted to this Hall. I felt that it would be a national waste, if such a wonderful Hall was not utilised to the fullest benefit and delectation of the public at Tanjore which cannot boast of even a single public hall of modest size. The adaptation of the Sangeetha Mahal to serve as a modern auditorium for music, drama and dance appeared to be quite a feasible proposition. After some experiments, necessary improvements have been made to reduce the echo and also to secure better light and ventilation. One great advantage in using this Hall is that neither furniture nor microphone is needed for any performence or public meeting and one such could be organised and conducted at short notice with minimum expense and least effort.

Another lamentable feature is that the race of artists who once flourished under the patronage of the rich and the regal is fast becoming extinct for want of publicity and patronage. It is mainly with the view to encouraging and publicising such artists and also creating an interest and an aptitude for patronage in the minds of the public for such fine arts, the Art Gallery Committee has thought fit to organise a Fine Arts Exhibition and an Art's Festival.

I am looking forward for a great future for the Art Gallery. Antique paintings are not easily available due to the possessive instinct in private persons being very strong and understandably so, in the matter of works of art. It is no wonder that our ancients defeated this instinct by painting their visions as murals so that they may not be peddled as painted canvas. Our anxiety is that nothing in the Art Gallery should savour of the cheap and the ephemeral. Our appeal to the public is that they should rise above he instinct for private possession and immortalise themselves by giving their best possession for the Art Gallery where posterity may remember them as lovers of art who cherished their possession over centuries and screened them from eyes of the invadar and the unsciupulous pedlar till the attainment of freedom only to give them up to the new Democracy that has come into being. With such thoughts uppermost in my mind I dedicate this one year old child to the public to cherish and nature to manhood in the times to come.

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APPENDIX III

TIRUVENGADU VILLAGE, ITS SITUATION AND CONTRIBUTION OF BRONZE SCULPTURES TO THE THANJAVUR ART GALLERY.

Tiruvengadu village is situated three miles from the present Kaveripoompatinam (Poompuhar) where the river Cauvery joins the Bay of Bengal. It is nine miles east of Sirkali or 25 miles from Mayuram junction which is further south on the same railway line. Regular Bus services are avilable at both places. Swetharanya swami (Siva) temple which lies in the middle of the village town is well maintained and under active worship to this day.

2. Literary evidence is available to the existence of the village as early as the second century AD. in the Tamil classic drama Silappadikaram. As the prosperous city of Pumpuhar of the classical chola times was submerged under the sea during the forth century A.D., we find that Tiruvengadu village was gaining religious importance. During the renaissance that followed the Kalabra interregnum (vide) para 2 of the introduction). Tiruvengadu village and the area around developed as seats of Saiva revival. Many early chola sculptures in stone and bronze can be seen in the temples at Sayavanam, Pallavaneeswaram, Tiruvelamkundram, Tirukkalikkamur and other villages around Tiruvengadu. All the four Saivite savants, Gnanasambandar, Appar, Sundaramoorthi Nayanar and Manickkavasagar who lived between 7th and 9th century A.D. have sanctified Tiruvengadu and other temples in the area in their hymns. Meykandar, the author of the basic text of saiva Siddhanta philosophy and Pattinathar called as Tiruvengadar were closely associated with the temple at Tiruvengadu.

3. The temple became an important centre of attraction with the rise in power of the medieval Cholas and Pandyas. Ninety-three inscriptions on the stone walls have been copied by the archaeological department during the years 1896 and 1918. They record gifts of lands, presentation of bronze idols and details of the maintenance deposits. The names of their donors have been specified sometime. The year in which the endowment had been made was stated as the year of accession of the then ruler. The images of Rishabavahana Devar, and HIs consort - Cat 13 and Bikshatanar Cat 14 are some of the bronze images mentioned in the inscriptions and they have been referred to in the text of this volume. A portion of the inscription No. 451 of 1918 in the old Tamil script relating to Bikshatana Cat 14 in its actual form and size has been reproduced in this volume with a photograph of its situation on the lower portion of the temple wall.

4. During the 18th and 19th centuries South Arcot district was the scene of intense military activity of the Nawabs of Arcot, the French and the English merchants, Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan. During these troubulous times the prosperous temple of Tiruvengadu which lies in proximity on the south was in imminent danger of loot by the army men and conquerors passing through the coastal belt to the south. To save their best bronze idols, the temple authorities had recourse to bury many of the best pieces secretly under the earth of which all information was lost to posterity. They are being recovered as treasure trove from time to time during casual digging in the vicinity of the temple.

5. The first batch of such treasure trove idols which consisted of Nataraja and other images were un-earthed in the year 1925. They were handed over to the temple where they can be seen at present. The second batch of eight pieces Cat Nos. 13, 14, 15 and 16 discovered during the year 1951

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were acquired by the Art Gallery. Two other treasure trove idols, Ardhanari (Half Siva and half parvathi) abd Budan which were recovered in the year 1960. are exhibited in the Government Museum, Madras. Sixteen more images and temple lamps were once again un-earthed in the year 1972. Of these, Subrahmanya and consorts Cat-No. 10, and Chandrasekarar and his consort Cat-No. 17, have been included in this volume. The rest of the treasure idols - Kannappa Nayanar, Tirunavukkarasu Nayanar, Sundaramurthy Nayanar and his consort, Pattinathar, portrait sculpture of Brahmadirayar, brahmin minister in charge of temple affairs, and temple lamps and utensils are described in volome II that will follow.

6. Much sanctity is attached to the worship of Siva at Tiruvengadu temple as Agoramurti. The legend is that Nandi Devar who was deputed by Siva to fight the demon Maruthuva Asura, was severely mauled during the encounter. At the prayers of Nandi Devar Siva's anger took the terrible form of Agoramurti with the blazing central eye, fang, protruding and eight arms, with the weapons thereon, At the sight of this form, the demon subjected himself to the grace of Siva. We see Siva symbolised in this form in the bronze idol described in Catalogue No.15. The temple is also endowed with, three bathing ghats sacred to sun, Moon and Fire gods, the tanks named after them. These holy tanks are also referred to in the classic drama Silappadikaram of the 2nd century A.D. The general set up of Nataraja Sabah (dance hall) and worship are of the same pattern of Chidambaram, The place is considered as the Adi (earliest) Chidambaram.

7. The place is also believed to be "Brahma smasanam" (பிரம ஸ்மசானம்) repository of the residual ashes of many Indiras, Brahmas and others who had disappeared previously during the cosmic disintegration. We are here reminded of the following Tamil verses:-

வேலைமலி தண்கானல் வெண்காட்டான் திருவடிக்கீழ்
மாலைமலி வண்சாந்தால் வழிபடுநன் மறையவன்றன்
மேலடர்வெங் காலனுயிர் விண்டபினை நமன்தூதர்
ஆலமிடற் றான்அடியார் என்றடர அஞ்சுவரே.

"எண்ணிலி இந்திரர் எத்தனையோ பிரமர்களும்
மண்மிசை மால்பலர் மாண்டார்"

"நூறுகோடி பிரமர்கள் நொந்தினார்"

"கோயில் சுடுகாடு கொல்புலித்தோல் நல்லாடை"

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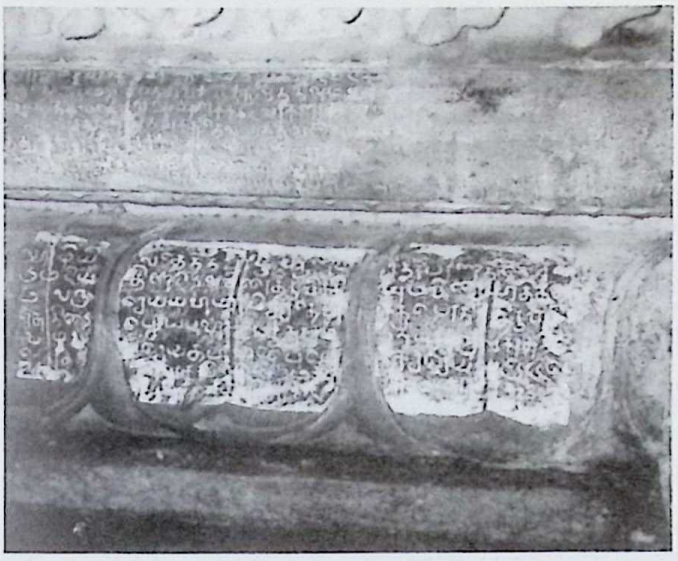
APPENDIX IV



Inscription No. 450 of 1918 on the western wall (bottom) of the sanctum of the

Tiruvengadu temple-

Presentation of PICHA THEVAR

(Bhikshatana)

by AMALAN CHEYAVAYAR

is referred to, (vide text of

cat. No. 14)

Inscription No. 451 of 1918 on the western wall (bottom) of the sanctum of Tiruvengadu temple.

Presentation of lands Jewels and other endowments to the bronze image of

PICHA THEVAR by AMALAN

CHEYAVAYAR already installed by him is mentioned along with the year of inscription at the begining. Carbon Impression taken from the wall.

vide pages 136 to 147

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முதல்வரி ஆரம்பம்
2
3 வரிகள்
4
147 ம் பக்கத் தொடர்ச்சி

Appendix
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ராஜாதிராஜன் 30 ஆவது ஆண்டில்
திருவெண்காடு கோவில்

1 Line Inscription Begins
2
3 } Contiuned From Page 147
4

ஸ்வஸ்தி ஸ்ரீ உடையார் ஸ்ரீ ராஜாதி
க் கிடந்த நிலத்தில் பிச்ச தேவர்க்கு
ட் டாண்டும் அருமொழி தேவதான ஆறு
... டலக்குப் பணி செய்யும் பெண்டுகள்

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IV Continued
inscription No. 451 of 1918

(10 ..O AD) செதுக்கப்பட்ட கல்வெட்டு)
மேற்கு கர்பக் கிரகத்தில் உள்ளது

அடுத்த பக்கம் தொடர்கிறது

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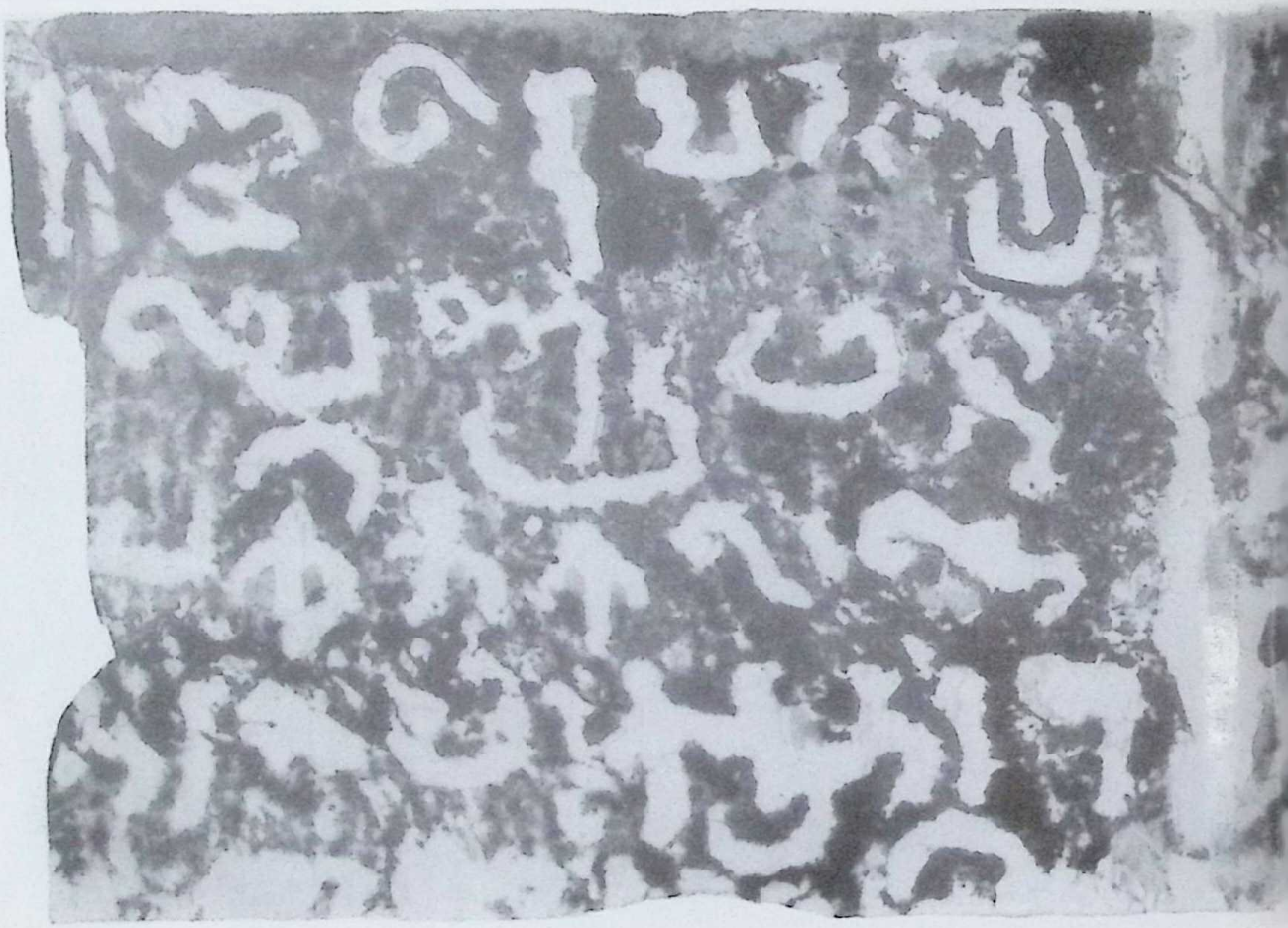
ராஜாதிராஜன் 30 ஆவது ஆண்டில்
திருவெண்காடு கோவில்

முன்பக்கத் தொடர்ச்சி



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ராஜ தேவர்க்கு யாண்டு 30 ஆவ
வேண்டும் நி வந்தங்களுக்கும்
பதி கல னெல்லு அளக்கக்கடவ
... பாக்கு நான் கினுக்கு நெலலுக்

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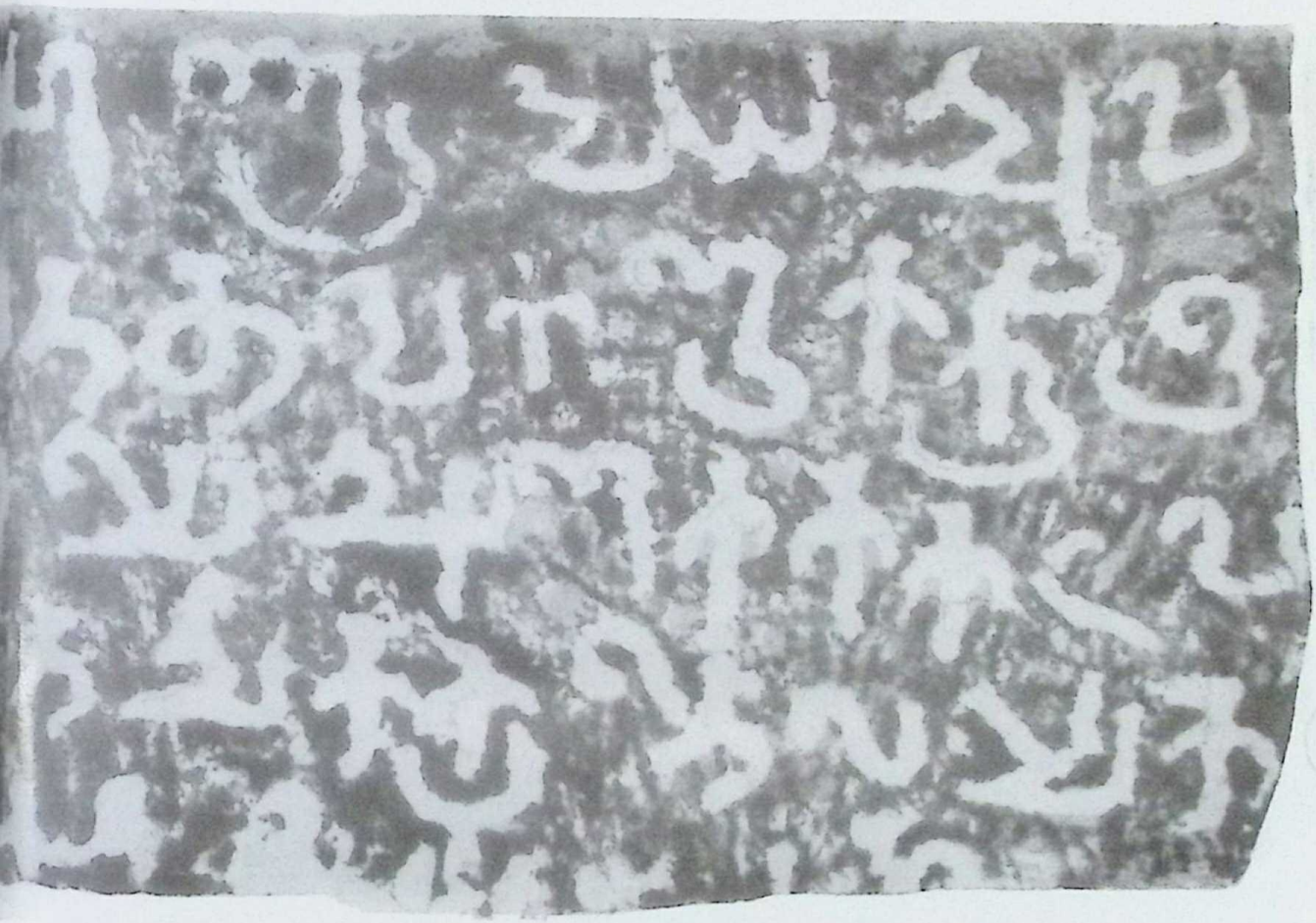
(1040 AD) செதுக்கப்பட்ட கல்வெட்டு
மேற்கு கர்பக் கிரகத்தில் உள்ளது

அடுத்த பக்கம் தொடர்கிறது



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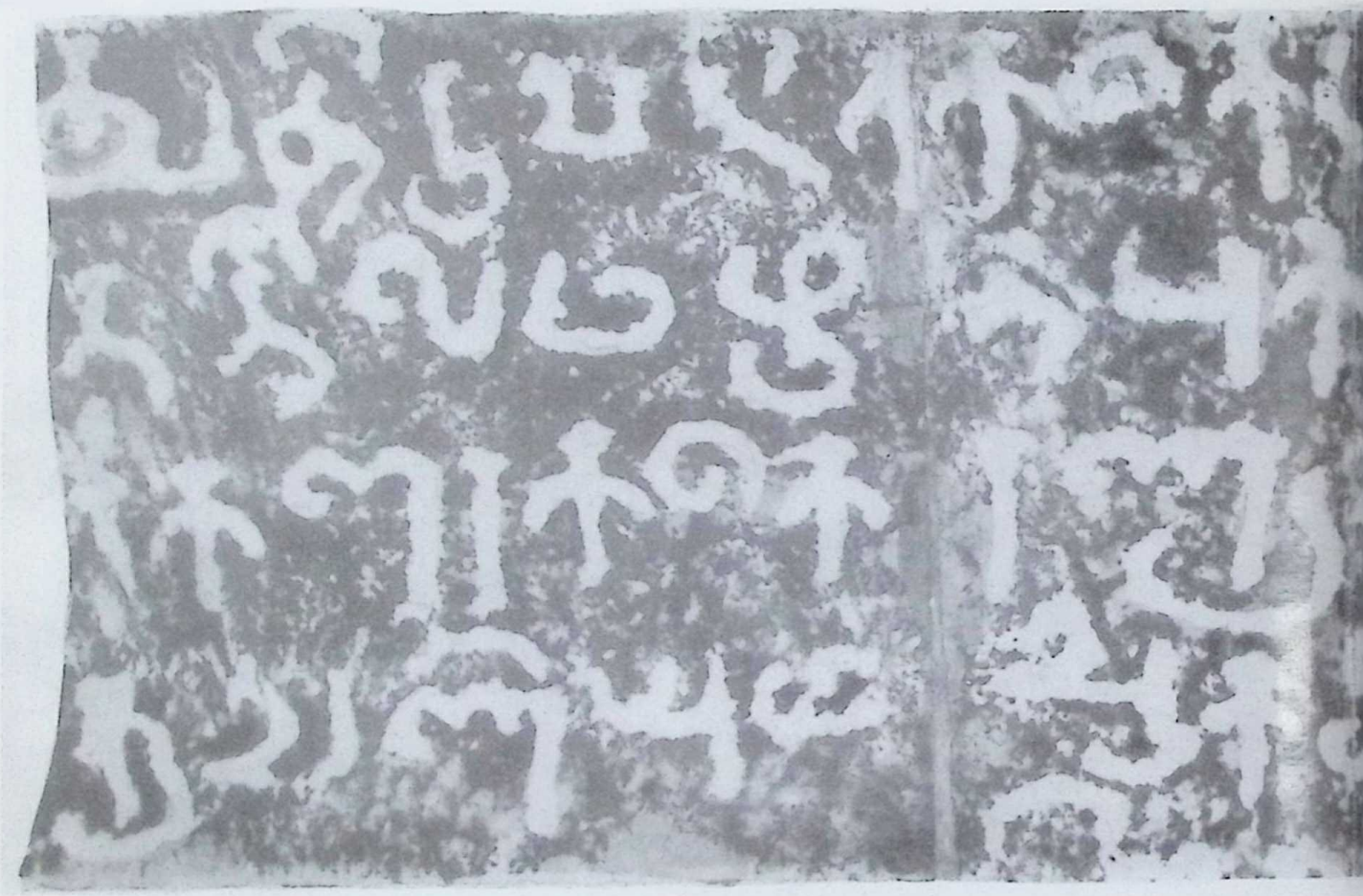
முன்பக்கத் தொடர்ச்சி



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து திருவடிகக கொட்டும் அ மலன் செ
ந் நிலம் முன்பு கடனாக இட்டு வரும்
ர் களாக கொண்டு கல்வி திருத்தனபி
குறுணியும் ஆகஇப் பரிசு நிவன்த

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IV Continued
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(1040 AD) செதுக்கப்பட்ட கல்வெட்டு)
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அடுத்த பக்கம் தொடர்கிறது

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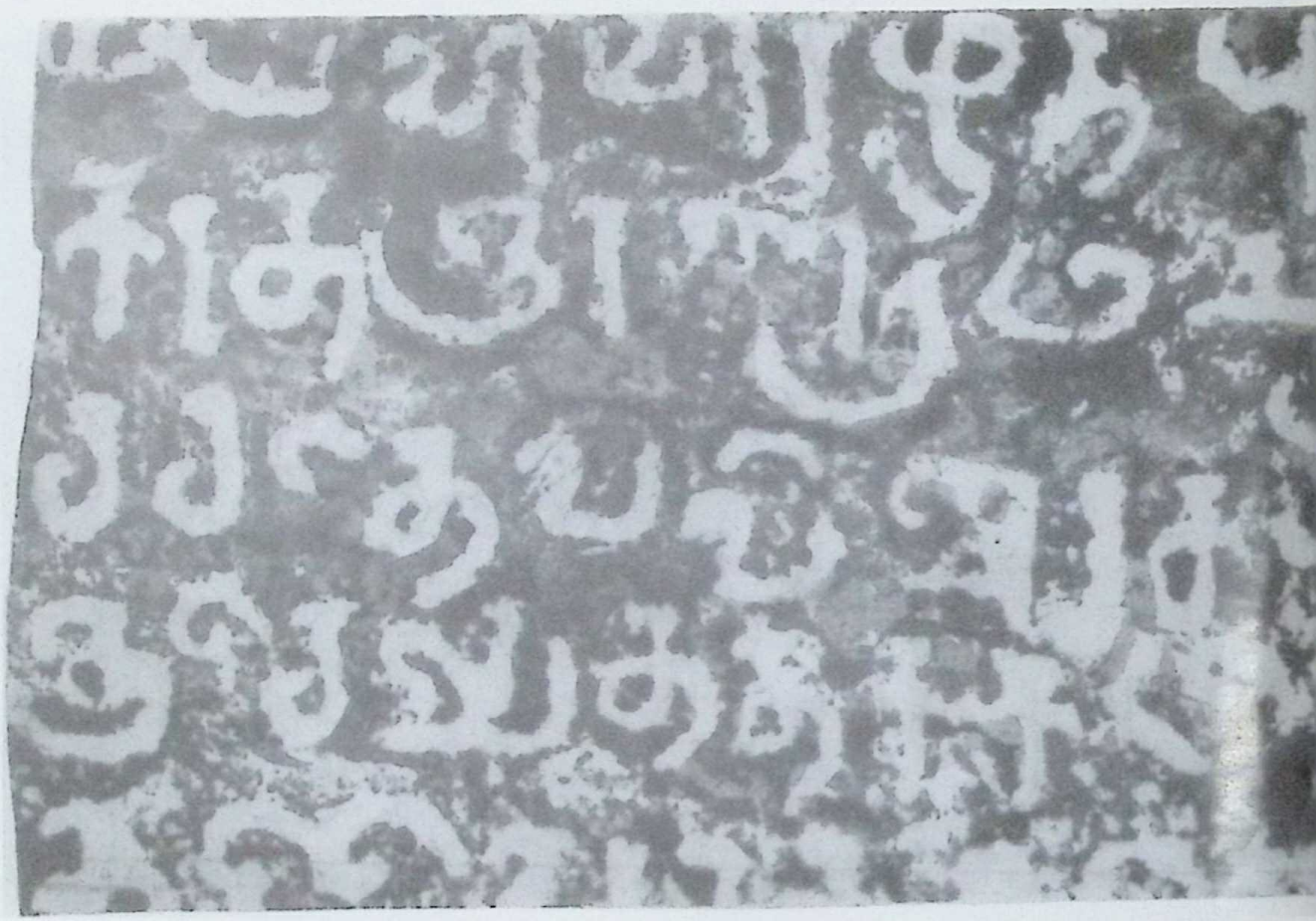
முன்பக்கத் தொடர்ச்சி



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யயவாயர் முன்பு இக் கோ எழு
காசு இரண்டும்ஆ ட்டாண்டும் டக்க
ச்ச தேவ விளாகம் ய8
ஞ் செலுத்தக் கடவார்களாக பம

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IV Continued
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(1040 AD) செதுக்கப்பட்ட கல்வெட்டு)
மேற்கு கர்பக் கிரகத்தில் உள்ளது

அடுத்த பக்கம் தொடர்கிறது

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ராஜாதிராஜன் 30 ஆவது ஆண்டில்
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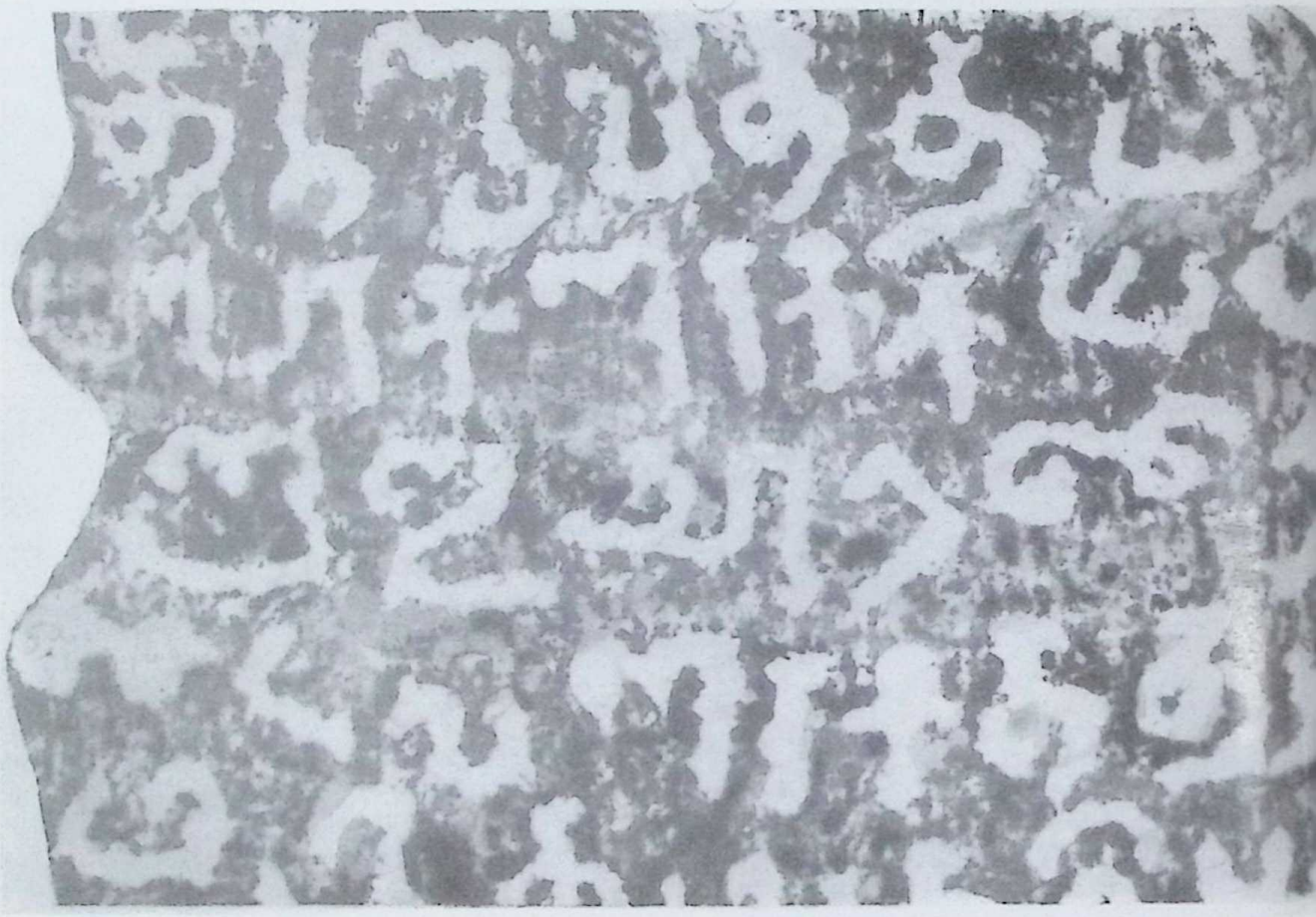
முன்பக்கத் தொடர்ச்சி



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ந்தரு ளு வித்தபி ச்சதே
டவர்களாக ய க்கு கெ
றுஉ றுற்றைறை(மு) பதின் கல
ண்ட விளாகதது ப்.....

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IV Continued
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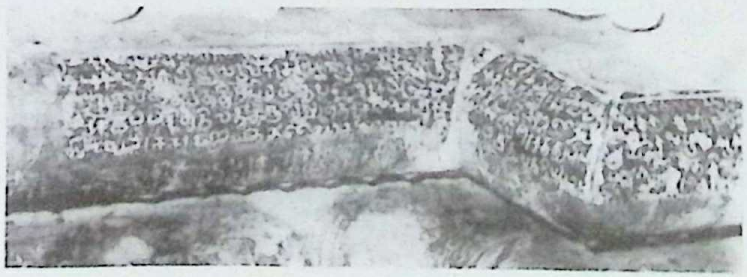
(1040 AD) செதுக்கப்பட்ட கல்வெட்டு)
மேற்கு கர்பக் கிரகத்தில் உள்ளது

அடுத்த பக்கம் தொடர்கிறது



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Append
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முன்பக்கத் தொடர்ச்சி

ராஜாதிராஜன் 30 ஆவது ஆண்டி
திருவெண்காடு கோவி

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வர்க்கு வேண்டும் நிவ தங்
ண்டு கல்வித் திதின வெண்ச
மும் ஆக ய 8வ
த நிலத்தில் பிச்சதேவர்கு

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V Continued
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1
2 வரிகள்
3
136 ம் பக்கம் தொடர்கிறது

040 AD) செதுக்கப்பட்ட கல்வெட்டு)
மற்கு கர்பக் கிரகத்தில் உள்ளது

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2) Lines : Contiuned on page 136
3)

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APPENDIX V

THANJAVUR ART GALLERY, THANJAVUR AND ITS ADMINISTRATION

The Thanjavur Art Gallery was formed in the year 1951 by the efforts of the then Collector of Thanjavur, late Thiru T.K. Palaniappan, I.A.S. and the public of Thanjavur District. The institution has been recognised as a private museum of Art by the Govt. of Tamil Nadu in G.O.M.S. 90 Education dated 30-1-1954 vesting it with the Place buildings occupied by it including Sangeetha (Music) Mahal. It is administered by a committee of officials and non-officials noted below with the collector of Thanjavur as its ex-officio Chairman.

The day to day administration is entrusted with the Curator and Asst Curator. The Art Gallery including the Arsenal Tower within, is kept open to the visiting public between 9-30 A.M., and 6 P.M. (with a lunch interval between 1 P.M. and 3 P.M.,) on all days including Sundays and public holidays. The Gallery is closed to the public only on four holidays viz., Tamil new years' day Saraswathi Pooja, Deepavali and Pongal. An entrance fee of fifty paise for adults and thirty paise for children below 12 years are charged for admission.

List of Members

Thanjavur District Collector **-Chairman**

OFFICIAL

i. Personal Assistant (general) to collector -Secretary.
ii. Executive Engineer (P.W.D.) Cauvery Division, Thanjavur
iii. District Educational Officer, - Thanjavur west
iv. Deputy Commissioner H.R. &. C.E., Department, Thanjavur.
v. Secretary, T.S.S.M. Library, Thanjavur.
vi. Deputy Director of Tourism, -Public (Tourism) Department, Madras.
vii. Director of Archaeology Tamil Nadu - Madras
viii. Chairman Municipal Council, Thanjavur

NON-OFFICIAL

ix. Srimanth Ry. Raja Ram Raja, Sahib, Senior Prince Thanjavur -Treasurer
x. Thiru. A. Srinivasa Ayyangar, Land Lord, Mannargudi,
xi. Thiru. N. Sethuraman B.Sc., Hony. President, Archaeological Society - Kumbakonam
xii. Dr. Suresh B. Pillai, Phd., Madras
Xiii. Vacant Joint Secretary
(Last holder late Mr. S. Swayamprakasam B.A.B.L Advocate Thanjavur)

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29-1-76 Art Gallery
Dr. KAMIL VZVELEBIL Thanjavur.
University of UTRECHT
INSTITUNT NOR GOSTERSETATEN
NOBELSTRAAT 2 B.
UTRECHT, HOLLAND.

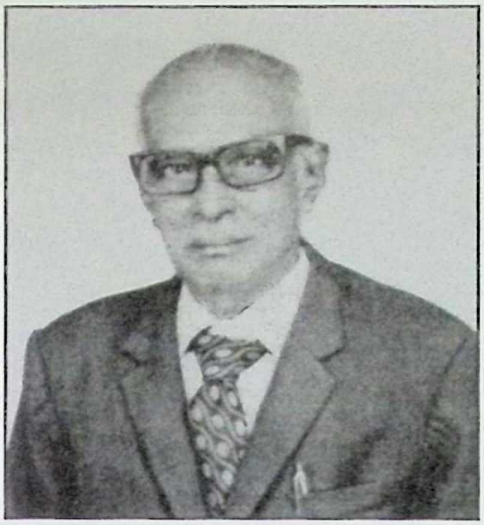
I came specifically to Thanjavur again for the purpose of visiting the most remarkable South Indian bronze sculpture collection in the world and I have seen a few in Madras, Delhi Philadelphia, Museum Guimet, Amsterdam etc. and to exchange views on the development of the Muruga Cult-Skanda Cult, mythus and iconography with the most learned Curator whose highly original views are refreshingly striking, and reveal a rare insight and profound knowledge. I shall be happy to visit this wonderful place again.

22-2-78
ANDREW HARVEY,
ALL SOULS COLLEGE,
OXFORD ENGLAND.
(Author of Poems - Winter scare crow etc).

This is a wonderful and magical museum

I long to have its Catalogue in my hands-How lucky we all are in its Curator - A fine scholar and a great teacher. I have read his Catalogue completely and studied the sculptures for several days. I am entirely satisfied with its suitability.

I feel sure also that nothing but the best Publication, the most refined and thorough readable would be adequate to the collection. Such a catalogue would be in demand all over the world among the art lovers and museums. The job must be superbly and quickly done if the glory of the museum is not to be obscured. With treasures such as these no expense should be spared.



The autho Thiru. S. Rathnasabapathy, B.A., son of S. Sivarama Pillai, native of Thanjavur town was born on September 22nd 1905. After graduation from the Madras University in physical sciences in the year 1928, he has served in the Civil Departments of the Tamil Nadu Government and retired as head accountant in the Huzur Treasury, Thanjavur. On retirement he is employed as the Curator of the Thanjavur Art Gallery since April 1961 till date. In his care, the Art Gallery has acquired about 150 bronzes besides better display of bronze exhibits and ample reserve funds for projects.

The remarks about him in the visitor's book of the gallery bear ample testimony of his extensive knowledge which helps him to convince the visitors, of the great heritage of Chola Artists in their delineation of the Saivite and Vaishnavite philosophy of the south embodied in the vest Tamil Literature of the early Sangam period and the hymns of the medieval period.

His manuscripts of the other exhibits of the gallery Viz. Nataraja, Ambikas, Nayanmars, Vishnu and other Gods, are pending publication in two more volumes.

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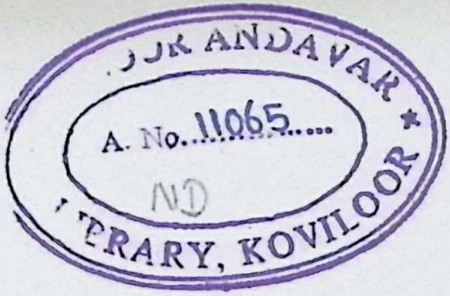

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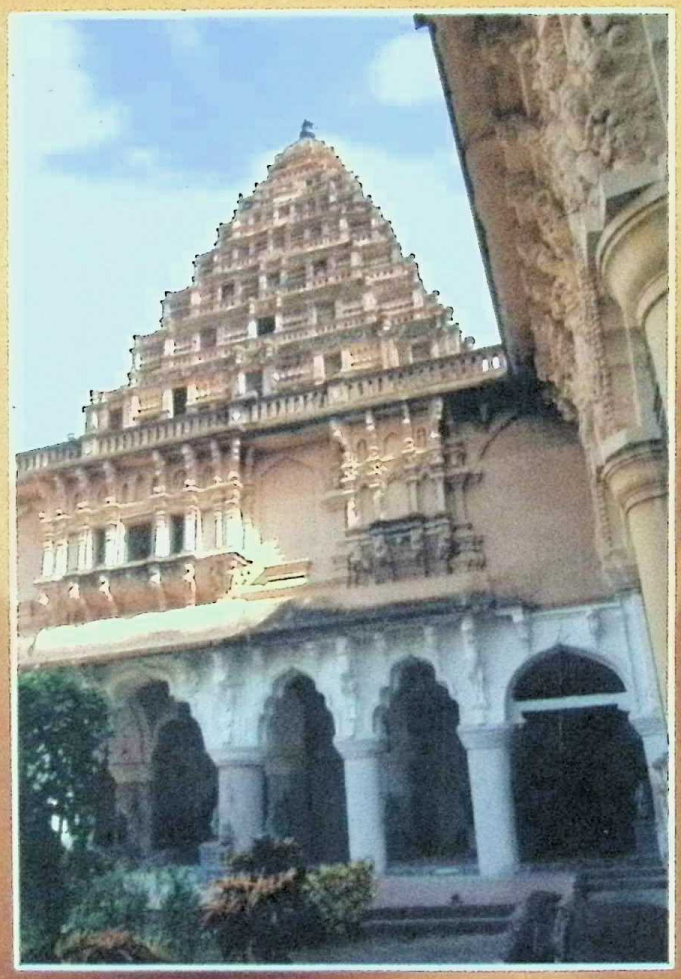
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